DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 435 839 CE 079 431

AUTHOR	Goodman, Gregory
TITLE	An Analysis of School-to-Work Implementation in Selected Charter Schools. Research Report.
INSTITUTION	Creative Research Associates, Inc., Tucson, AZ.
PUB DATE	1998-01-00
NOTE	69p.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research (143)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Administrator Attitudes; *Charter Schools; Comparative Analysis; *Education Work Relationship; *Educational Objectives; Educational Practices; High Schools; *Outcomes of Education; Parent Attitudes; Partnerships In Education; *Program Implementation; Student Attitudes; Student Characteristics; *Vocational Education
IDENTIFIERS	*Arizona (South); Impact Studies; School to Work Opportunities Act 1994

ABSTRACT

Three charter schools in southern Arizona--Pimeria Alta High School, Vail Charter High School, and VISION High School--were profiled to ascertain the role of school-to-work (STW) in charter schools. The profiles focused on the following: students' and parents' characteristics and reasons for selecting a charter school; and available facilities, support staff, and support networks. In addition, each school's superintendent/head administrator described her school's STW component, its replication potential, and barriers to implementation of STW. The following were among the many similarities between charter schools and the STW concept identified: (1) both were rooted in current public sentiment; (2) both addressed the concern of how to make communities more responsible for preparing children for the future; and (3) both operated on the belief that curricula should link learning to the world beyond the classroom and allow students to explore ideas based on their own interests. At all three charter schools, STW systems were aiding in the observation and documentation of students' progress through partnerships with local businesses and organizations. (The report contains 10 references. Appended are transcripts of interviews with each school's superintendent/head administrator and statistical graphs on the three schools.) (MN)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 435 839

AN ANALYSIS OF SCHOOL-TO-WORK IMPLEMENTATION IN SELECTED CHARTER SCHOOLS

RESEARCH REPORT

GREGORY GOODMAN, M.S.

CREATIVE RESEARCH ASSOCIATES

JANUARY 1998

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

G Goodman

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

CREATIVE RESEARCH ASSOCIATES, INC.
1235 S. CAMINO ARRIBA
TUCSON, ARIZONA 85713
(520) 884-8667

CE079431.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract 4

Executive Summary 5

School-to-Work 8

Charter Schools

I. Pimeria Alta Charter School

Students

a. Characteristics of Population 9

b. Reasons for Attending the Charter School 10

Parents

a. Characteristics, demographics 11

b. Reasons for Choosing Charter School 12

c. Level of Involvement 12

Administrators

a. Facility 12

b. Support Staff 13

c. STW Component 14

d. Support Network 16

e. Replication Potential 16

f. Barriers 17

II. Vail Charter High School

Students

a. Academic Performance Prior to Charter School Entrance 19

b. Characteristics of Population 19

c. Reasons for Attending the Charter School 22

d. Expectations 23

Parents

a. Reasons for Choosing Charter School 23

b. Expectations 25

c. Level of Involvement 26

Administrators

a. Facility 26

b. STW Component 26

c. Support Network 31

d. Replication Potential 32

e. Barriers 33

III. VISION High School
Students
a. Characteristics of Population 34
b. Reasons for Attending the Charter School 35
c. Expectations 36
Parents
a. Reasons for Choosing Charter School 36
b. Attitudes/Expectations 36
c. Level of Involvement 37
Administrators
a. Facility/Curriculum 37
b. School-to-Work Component 40
c. Support Network 40
d. Barriers 41
Summary 43
References 44

Appendices
Appendix A: Transcript of Interview with Sandra Potter 45
Appendix B: Transcript of Interview with Debra D'Amore 55
Appendix C: Transcript of Interview with Wilma Soroosh 59
Appendix D: Statistical Graphs on Pimeria Alta 62
Appendix E: Statistical Graphs on Vail 64
Appendix F: Statistical Graphs on VISION 67

ABSTRACT

This report profiles three charter schools in Southern Arizona that implement the School-to-Work philosophy. They are completely different in the type of facility in which they operate, and in the types of students they serve. All three charter schools represent different geographical sections within the Pima/Santa Cruz County area, and all are in different phases of operation. The amount of information on each school differs in proportion to their phase of operation. One school has been up and running for two and a half years, another is in the first year of operation, and the third is slated to open mid-year of 1998. Similarity between the three schools show that they are members of the Pima/Santa Cruz County School-to-Work Partnership, and implement STW as an integral part of their curriculum. Features of the report include dimensions of School-to-Work implementation within each school, as well as subsections on students, parents, and administrators. The report attempts to capture the unique setting of each school, and provide documentation on whether or not School-to-Work has had a substantive effect on those schools.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to profile three charter schools in Southern Arizona, to determine the direction, extent and focus of School-to-Work implementation, and to ascertain the degree of any substantive effect School-to-Work has had as a systemic component for each school. The Table of Contents serves as a guide for the direction and type of information that was retrieved from each school. The amount of information for each subsection varies depending on the school under discussion, because the quantity of information on each school differs in proportion to their phase of operation, or because of particular facets unique to each school. For instance, there is more information on parents in the parent section for Vail Charter School than there is in the same section for Pimeria Alta, because 50% of the student population at Pimeria Alta is 18 years of age or older. The presence of parents at Pimeria Alta is of a lesser degree. The student population at Pimeria Alta is predominantly Hispanic, Vail Charter School's population is predominantly White, and Vision's population is mostly Native American. The following information illustrates some of the demographic and informational highlights of the three charter schools.

Pimeria Alta High School -Nogales, Arizona

- Student population by gender shows 51% male, 49% female, total population=227.
- 58% of juniors and seniors are female.
- 50% of students are 18 years of age or older.
- 25% of students are parents.
- 82% of the students are limited English proficient.
- 87% of the students fall below the poverty level.
- 98.7% of the student population is Hispanic.
- At the end of the first year, Pimeria Alta had a student absentee rate of 22%, 19% at the end of the second year, and 12% half-way through their third year.
- There have been 62 graduates. Of those 62, 27 (43.5%) are attending a post-secondary institution.
- 12 students are currently on juvenile probation.
- 2 students are currently on adult probation.
- The majority of the students are in the 30th to 50th percentile, based on Stanford 9 Test results taken last year (1996-1997).

Vail Charter High School - Vail, Arizona

- Student population by gender shows 55.5% male, 44.5% female, total population=99.
- Out of the total number (99), 76 are White, 5 are African-American, and 18 are Hispanic.
- Out of the total number (99), 46 are freshmen, 21 are sophomores, 18 are juniors, and 14 are seniors.
- Prior academic performance before charter school entrance shows a mean GPA of 2.4 for the males, and 2.55 for the females (4.0 grading scale). Mean GPA for total population on prior academic performance is 2.48.
- The most frequent response as to why parents chose Vail over other schools: Small sized school with smaller working groups. The second most frequent response, computer/technology emphasis.
- The most frequent response as to what parents expect from their child attending Vail: Preparation for College. The second most frequent response, quality education/better education.
- 74 students (91.4%) live in two-parent households, and 7 students (8.6%) live in single-parent households.
- Degree of parent involvement has been rated by the following: 29 students (35.8%) have been identified as having parents that are highly involved in Vail processes. Twenty six students have parents that are involved at a 'medium' level, and 26 students have parents that are identified as low level involvement.
- When students were asked in a survey who was the most supportive in helping them identify a career interest, the most frequent response was 'family.'
- 46% of the students in the survey have not taken any courses related to their career interests.
- 50% of the respondents indicated that career guidance offered at school was 'Very' or 'Somewhat Helpful.'

VISION High School - Tucson, Arizona

- The total student population is 35 (N=35). There are 27 males and 8 females.
- The ages of the students range from 13 to 18.
- Division of ethnicity reveals the following: 30 Native Americans (86%), 3 Hispanics (9%), and 2 Whites (5%).
- Out of the total student number of 35, there are 16 high school drop-outs (46%).
- Out of those 16 drop-outs, 13 are male, and 3 are female. Division of ethnicity among the drop-outs reveal the following: 13 Native Americans, 2 Hispanics, and 1 White.
- Grade levels range from 8th grade to 11th, with the majority of students in the 9th grade (15 students at 43%). Categories of grade level show the following: 7 students in the 8th

grade, 15 students in the 9th grade, 2 students in the 10th grade, 2 students in the 11th grade, and 9 students show no record of grade level.

- Ten students live in two-parent households, 9 students live in single-parent households, 2 students live on their own, and 14 provided no information on that category.
- There were five students that provided information on prior academic performance. The grade point averages range from 3.0 to .5 (on a 4.0 scale). The mean grade point average between the five students is 2.1 (on a 4.0 scale).
- Some students are attending because of the School-to-Work component, some have admitted to attendance problems and academic problems, and one student carried a weapon to a previously attended high school.

SCHOOL-TO-WORK

School-to-Work (STW) is a legislative initiative passed by Congress and signed by President Clinton in 1994. It is the only federal initiative under the jurisdiction of two departments -- Education and Labor. It represents a systemic approach towards curricula that emphasizes school-based activities with work-based activities, and the connection between the two. STW is an initiative that encourages students, parents, and entire communities to band together in a concerted effort to connect the activities of the classroom with the demands of the work place. Career awareness and development in the classroom is integrated with business consortiums that provide job-shadowing activities, co-op work experiences, internships, and actual employment. It helps prepare students for the world of work by creating relationships with potential employers on what types of skills students need to become qualified for and compete in the market place.

"The Pima and Santa Cruz County School-to-Work Partnership was organized in the Spring of 1996 to administer two grants made under the federal School-to-Work Opportunities Act of 1994 -- which directs that all of America's children will be prepared for economic self-sufficiency through exposure to career choices and pathways as part of their educational experience. All school districts, colleges and universities, economic development offices, employers, professional organizations, labor unions, community agencies serving youth, governmental entities, apprenticeship sponsors and many others are automatically part of the partnership and are invited to assist with this undertaking. A Board of Governors, composed of 10 representatives from business and labor, seven educators and one member each from city and county government, makes overall policy for the partnership, while day-to-day activities are directed by a small staff whose services are augmented by consultants employed by the state and federal School-to-Work organizations. The Partnership Office is located at 10 N. Norton Avenue in Tucson, Arizona."

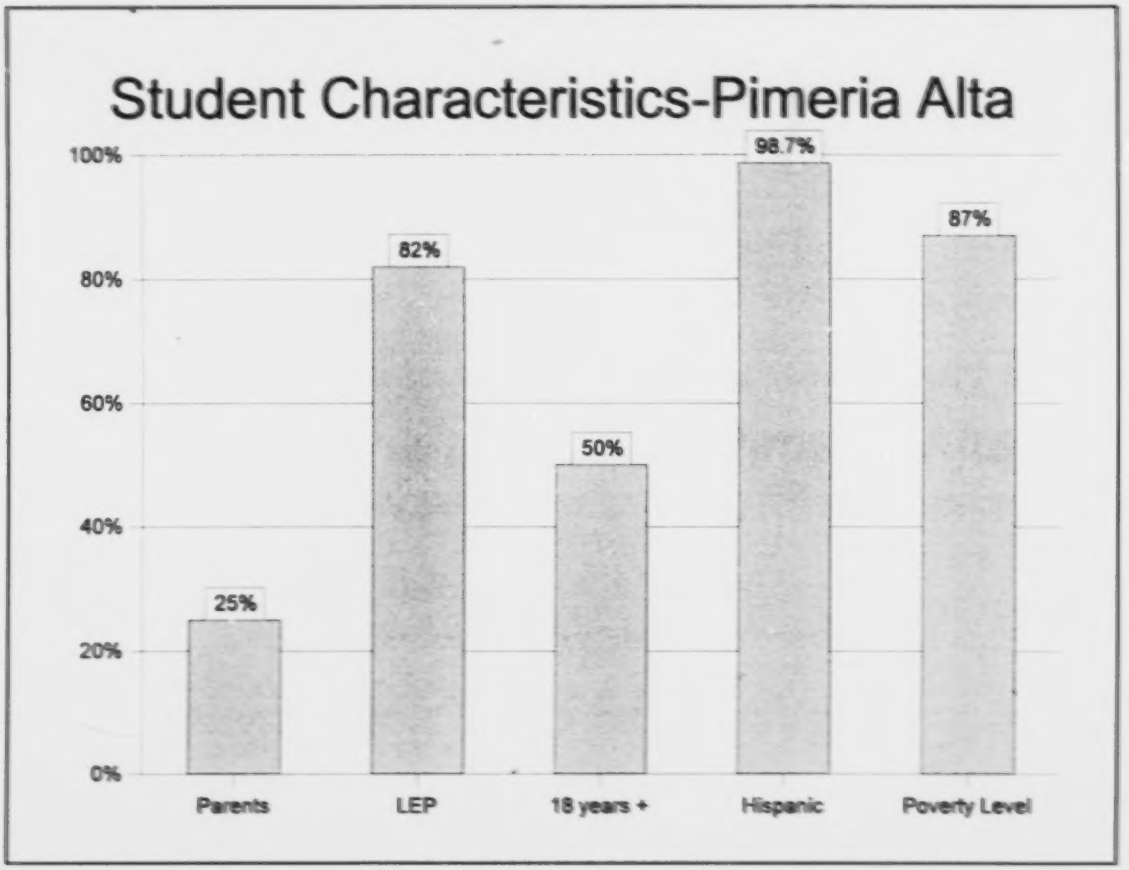
"The goal of the partnership is to establish an enduring system in which many individual agencies and projects join in achieving the task set out under the law. Pima and Santa Cruz School to Work initiatives include contracts with existing groups whose services help tie curriculum-driven learning to worksite applications, community wide seminars during which ideas, techniques and tactics are shared, publications that document and describe existing successful school to work activities and a competitive mini-grant process to provide seed money for new, easily replicated school to work ventures that partner educators and employers in workforce development" (Pima/Santa Cruz County STW Partnership, 1996).

CHARTER SCHOOLS

I. Pimeria Alta Charter School Sandra Potter, Superintendent
STUDENTS
A. Characteristics of Student Population

Two-thirds of the 227 students at Pimeria Alta High School fit the criteria for at-risk students. Eighty-nine percent (89%) of the students are limited English proficient (LEP) and 98% of the students' home language is Spanish. The students range from remedial to accelerated academic levels. Fifty percent (50%) work at minimum wage jobs which do not require a high school diploma. During the 1997-1998 school year, enrollment is projected at 250 high school students and 25 middle school students. One-third of the school's student population is "first offenders" expelled or suspended from their middle or high schools for various activities such as fighting and drug abuse. A small percentage (6%) have been referred to the school by the court system's probation department. The other two-thirds of the student population either have been out of school for two to five years or have withdrawn from their previous school district, choosing to attend Pimeria Alta. They desire to attain high school diplomas. Currently, 18 of the high school students maintain duel enrollment with Pima Community College, whereby credits earned at PCC can be applied toward required credits for a high school diploma. Thirty percent (30%) of the students are new residents in the country within the past three years, and 87% are members of low-income families. Other characteristics include the following:

- 50% of students are 18 years of age or older.
- 25% of students are parents.
- 87% of the students fall below the poverty level.
- 98.7% of the student population is Hispanic.
- At the end of the first year, Pimeria Alta had a student absentee rate of 22%, 19% at the end of the second year, and 12% half-way through their third year.
- There have been 62 graduates. Of those 62, 27 (43.5%) are attending a post-secondary institution.
- 12 students are currently on juvenile probation.
- 2 students are currently on adult probation.
- The majority of the students are in the 13th to 50th percentile, based on Stanford 9 Test results taken last year (1996-1997).



Note. LEP=Limited English Proficient. Parents=students who are parents. Poverty level=economic status. Total number of student population=227.

B. Student Reasons for Attending Pimeria Alta

Diversified Work/School-to-Work Credits

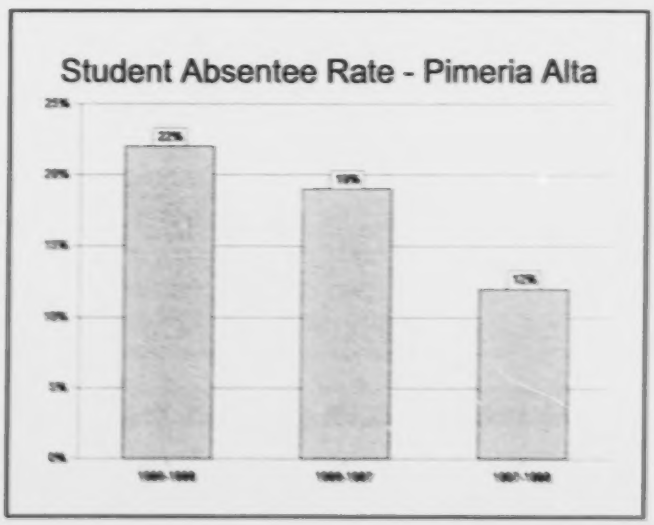
Many of the students at Pimeria Alta High School have to work, either because they have families or they are supporting the immediate, nuclear family. The schedule in the traditional school systems does not adapt to meet those types of needs for students. Over 60% of the Pimeria Alta students were working full-time or part-time during the last quarter of the 1996-97 school year. They earn core credits as well as credits through School-to-Work and diversified work programs that are available at Pimeria Alta. The school operates on a split-schedule which encourages employers to work with the students and the school on rescheduling hours.

An Open Entry/Exit Program

When a student enrolls at Pimeria Alta, they start at the level at which they are tested. Students are not told that they are "too late" for a specific required class and that they must start next year. The student is tested so that he or she starts at the appropriate academic level. They then progress through their graduation plan at their own pace.

Respect for the Student

A survey is given to the students every Spring on questions about why they came to Pimeria Alta High School, why they are still there, and what they like best about the school. The number one response given, based on two Spring quarter surveys is, 'because the staff respects me.' According to Sandra Potter, this is a major issue with students and has become an important practice for maintaining student satisfaction.



PARENTS/COUNTY

A. Characteristics/Demographics

The majority of the district's students and their families are workers on ranches and in maquiladora plants (use of American manufacturing plants operating on both sides of the border in Nogales, Sonora, Mexico), in produce companies or are federal employees with the Department of Immigration and the Drug Enforcement Agency. Santa Cruz County is a

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

designated enterprise zone. As such, it is characterized by pervasive poverty, unemployment, and general distress (Arizona Department of Economic Security, 1995). Fifty-one percent (51%) of people in the county do not have a high school diploma. The County has a 28% unemployment rate, and 77% of the 32,400 population speak Spanish as their home language. An increasing number of students are enrolling at their parents' requests, as parents inquire about technologically driven instruction, the School-to-Work component, and the fine arts (S. Potter, 1997).

B. Reasons for Choosing Pimeria Alta

Sandra Potter personally interviews every parent and student wanting to attend Pimeria Alta, and one of the questions always asked is, 'Why are you here instead of another school?' The most frequent responses to date are the following: (a) There are too many kids in the class, (b) discipline is non-existent if it exists at all, (c) there are too many drugs and too much fighting, (d) the principal does not show respect for my child, (e) the teachers do not seem to get along, (f) there is no agreement from classroom to classroom and, (g) the curriculum seems to be either very difficult or very easy, there is no middle ground or balance.

C. Level of Parent Involvement

Currently parents are at what is considered a low level involvement with the school and with the School-to-Work component. Fifty percent (50%) of the students are 18 years of age or older, and others have been through other school systems. Parent involvement exists in ways such as providing transportation, and guest-speaking at the school about their occupations. Parents who are in businesses are very supportive of the school and the School-to-Work approach. Contacts are regularly made with businesses by parents who are business people. Working parents act as a bridge between the school and businesses. The parents that are involved tend to be working parents. The County's limited resources create a dynamic whereby the connection made between school and community is on a very personal basis, working with the specifics of the culture and personality of the community (S. Potter, 1997).

ADMINISTRATORS
A. Facility/Curriculum

Concerned about the significant numbers of students idle on the streets of Nogales, Arizona, Santa Cruz County Superintendent of Schools, Robert Canchola, initiated an effort in 1994 to provide a type of educational alternative to which the students might respond. Charter school state legislation had passed in June of that year - the same year School-to-Work passed as a legislative initiative. Canchola looked for the support of someone with considerable

educational experience and highly innovative teaching methods. He turned to Sandra Potter, who had worked in public school systems for almost 30 years. Pimeria Alta opened with 123 students in the Fall of 1995, and admitted 217 by Fall of 1997. It was the first bilingual charter school to be established by contract with the State Board for Charter Schools in Arizona. Due to an increasing demand for its services, the program has grown to include a high school, a middle school, and the students at the Juvenile Detention Center. The non-traditional setting is intended to provide the students with learning and life styles in which the students' language and culture are respected. In the future, Ms. Potter plans to emphasize sharing of the facility with the community i.e., labs for people who do not have access to particular types of resources. With regard to the School-to-Work approach, the school partners with people and businesses who have their own facilities. For example, the carpentry students do the curriculum part of the program at the school in the morning, then go to the appropriate facilities in the afternoon.

The curriculum has computer-assisted instruction through NovaNet. The national headquarters for NovaNet is in Tucson, and through the company Pimeria Alta has their own curriculum coordinator, who aligned the school's curriculum with the state standards. The School-to-Work program portion of the curriculum was developed by Dr. Karen Newman and Melinda Rinde, Pimeria Alta's NovaNet curriculum consultant. Dr. Newman is the education consultant who developed the four levels of vocational education for the state of Arizona. Levels one, two, and three are on the computers -- and level four is the actual work experience.

B. Support Staff

The School-to-Work curriculum at Pimeria Alta is based on the Total Quality Management concept of cooperation (as opposed to competition) and teamwork. The philosophy operates on the notion that 'team' consists of students, teachers, family, community based organizations, business partners, and governmental agencies. The school has certified teachers teaching the curricular part, and the components of the School-to-Work curriculum are taught by trade practitioners i.e., the carpenter teaches carpentry, the nurse teaches nursing, a police officer teaches law enforcement etc. Pimeria Alta's second mini-grant received from Pima/Santa Cruz County's School-to-Work Partnership provided a STW Liaison who has made tremendous strides in developing networks between school, community, businesses, and governmental agencies, such as the school's Law Enforcement Program in cooperation with the Nogales Police Department. Clarisa Arizmendi is the STW Liaison for Pimeria Alta. Currently, she is working on implementing First Aid and CPR Certification for three career pathways (nursing assistant, law enforcement and child care). She has contacted Tom Wilson, who is the Director for the National Safety Council in Tucson. Mr. Wilson has agreed to designate Pimeria Alta as a sub-agency, which would allow the staff at Pimeria Alta to receive certification for both First Aid and CPR instruction -- and then in return, instruct other students and staff for certification.

C. School-to-Work Component

School-to-Work Partnerships/Networks

The following community partnerships are involved with Pimeria Alta and the School-to-Work component:

Health

- Carondelet Health Network
- Juntos Unidos
- Vecinos
- Santa Cruz/Pima School-to-Work Consortium
- JTPA
- DES
- Cochise College
- Department of Health Occupations
- Arizona Hospital Health Care Association
- Santa Cruz County Health Department
- Santa Cruz Valley Unified District #35
- Platicamos Salud
- Santa Cruz Training Center
- Kino Hospital
- Gateway Community College
- Other local clinics and physicians

Public Service

- Nogales City Police Department
- Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office
- U.S. Customs
- Army Recruiter's Office
- Navy Recruiter's Office

Technology/Trades

- Community Vocational Education Center
- Local Carpenters
- Local Interior Design Company

Administrative Support

- Southern Arizona Legal Aid
- Santa Cruz County Superintendent of Schools Office

Sales and Marketing

- Nahual Magazine
- Nogales International Newspaper
- NetDirect Inc.
- Jostens

School-to-Work in Action

According to Superintendent Potter, the school would not be at the level that it is with their major programs (Nursing, Law Enforcement, and Arts Programs) if it were not for the extra financial support from the mini-grants funded by School-to-Work. The Nursing Program has extended to having five community members in each cohort going through the program. What has started as one major partner, Carondelet, now has extended to 12 health partners that share in the activities, expenses, etc.

The Arts program became a part of the School-to-Work program because as the students produced their products in clay and stained glass, they were required to take the School-to-Work curriculum on NovaNet -- in the Business Curriculum Pathway on how to do sales, marketing, and financial services. This is how STW connects with the program, the students have their own fund and business account from generating funds from pottery and stained glass sales. Fifty percent (50%) of the profit goes to the student who manufactured the product, and 50% goes back into the Arts Program. According to Superintendent Potter, this has increased student acceptance of the classroom aspect of School-to-Work, because the process has helped them realize that what they learn in the curriculum is relevant.

The Law Enforcement Program features outstanding cooperation and participation from the Nogales City Police Department and the Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office. The program includes 11 lessons. One officer or a team of two are responsible for presenting each specific lesson. According to Clarisa Arizmendi, School-to-Work Coordinator, Chief Alday of the Nogales City Police Department is such a believer in School-to-Work, he agreed to "facilitate" employment at the police department if any student successfully completes the program and seriously wants to continue in law enforcement.

Student Success Provides Inspiration for Others: A Case in Point

In the Nursing Program, a recent Pimeria Alta graduate passed her State Certification Test. This was a pregnant young lady who went to Pimeria Alta to finish her high school diploma. At first she was only concerned about getting the high school diploma. She now has a healthy baby, her diploma and her CNA certification, and has an offer from Mariposa Health Clinic in Nogales to start at $7.00 an hour as a Certified Nursing Assistant. Instead of staying at Burger King at minimum wage, she can now support her child. She is looking at extending her education and going on to college to become a pediatric nurse -- which she never considered before. She realizes now that she can do it. This has become a real inspiration to the students who are still in the program. Some of the new cohort students had previously been lacking in attendance because they were not sure if the program was worth it. Now they look at her and say to each other, 'we can do it.'

D. Support Network

Colleges and Universities

Pimeria Alta enjoys great cooperation and teaming efforts with Tucson College, Arizona International Campus, the University of Arizona, Cochise College, Prescott College, and Northern Arizona University.

Other Charter Schools/Members of Pima/Santa Cruz STW Partnership

There is not a well developed support network between charter schools and other STW members. School-to-Work is of a necessity that it becomes individualized within each school. It is difficult to have a network in the traditional sense, because it is so individualized. And this is especially so with charter schools because each charter school operates in a different way. It is also difficult for charter schools to network with traditional school systems if they are not part of the district, because traditional school systems see charter schools as competition rather than collaborators.

E. Replication Potential - A Question Posed to Superintendent Potter

Question: ***What can you discuss about the STW replicating effect for others who want to take your approach?***

Each school, even in the traditional systems, each district is so unique. Even if you have the same population, there are so many variables/factors, that you can't truly replicate what one school does in STW. There has to be a person in each school that really believes in this, and that's going to push this agenda, to get it moving. If you don't have someone to totally buy in and get it moving, it's not going to be STW, because you're either going to have "activities" or a job-placement bureau. You must have a connecting component between what goes on in school and what goes on at work -- that's STW, that connection. And that's what's difficult in replicating. Because communities are different, school population, staff, their capabilities, and the creativity levels are all different. Replication is not really an issue at all, and I don't think it should be. Implementation involves not replicating, but adapting to the resources you have. Even if you have the same resources, you won't have the same school board. School Boards may not be willing to go along with the same types of initiatives. You can give others encouragement and strategies -- sharing programs or show them how you did it. And they can take all the data, look at what they have, consider what they can do with examples plus their own initiatives, and make it their own.

F. Barriers - A Question Posed to Superintendent Potter

Question: ***Does STW (working with businesses, employers, trades, etc.), greatly add to the bureaucratic process?***

Yes. It adds to the red tape and can be a problem. The STW Liaison is the link to all the other components. For instance, we have a registered nurse who teaches our Nursing Program. It took 4 months of red-tape and paper work to get it where all 8 partners in the program could agree to how it was going to work. We had to prove to them that we were not a fly-by-night organization and that we had liability on each of the students. They then had to accept liability at a certain point in the transition period. This took 4 months of negotiation, paperwork, FAXing, etc. So it can be very burdensome. Without the help of the STW Liaison, and the nurse that runs the health program, and the law enforcement personnel putting in their time, these programs wouldn't exist. Without the STW Grant, the Title VII Grant, community grants, Project Intervention etc. to provide funding for us, we wouldn't be able to do it the way we do it right now. For small schools in particular with limited personnel, each wearing many hats, it could be a nightmare.

Start-up Processes

The first step was initiating the application process for a charter school in Nogales, Arizona. Superintendent Potter and Santa Cruz County Superintendent of Schools, Robert Canchola obtained state funding supplemented by Title I, II, IV, VI, and two Title VII Federal Grants for bilingual education extended over a five-year period. This established the Nogales District #24 Pimeria Alta Charter High School. It took six months after writing the Grants before it was chartered, and another five months to recruit staff and find a facility. It opened in October of 1995 with 75 students, five teachers, and a building loaned by Pima Community College. During the time of sharing the facility with Pima Community College, Superintendent Potter felt that the arrangement did not allow the degree of freedom needed to run the school. The facility was located in an area in which senior citizen and day care activities were abundant, causing too many distractions.

A very difficult nine-month period of adjustments and amendments ensued. After the first nine months of operation, intensive review sessions were conducted to determine the direction of the school, the degree of progress, and any corrections that needed to be made along the way. During the period of adjustment, new charter schools run the risk of heading in an unforeseen direction which is influenced by intangible forces. These forces are a culmination of many processes which can sway the originally intended direction of the school through opposition by an array of powerful educational groups, educational bureaucracy, local and state politics, staff turn-over, community perceptions, biased media coverage, and other elements.

Staff Turn-Over the First Two Years

Finding a team of personnel that could function in an environment which is atypical of the traditional school system was extremely difficult. The issue of certified and non-certified teachers and equality was also a major issue that needed to be addressed e.g., Pimeria Alta utilizes licensed carpenters to teach classes in carpentry and police officers for the Law Enforcement Program -- but they have no teacher certification. This brings into question the validity of the curriculum and class credits.

Negative Public Opinion and Distrust Fueled by Local Media

The local newspapers in Santa Cruz County would go to administrators from the traditional school systems to get their information. Superintendent Potter feels that the traditional school systems see Pimeria Alta as competitors rather than collaborators. Some of the criticisms mentioned include arguments that Pimeria Alta distracted the educational community from their duty to fix problems in the existing public schools, Pimeria Alta is a quick-fix approach to a more serious problem, and the concern over wide-open requirements with regard to who can teach at the charter school.

Not Having the Support of a Larger System

The traditional public school system continues to receive funding regardless of how well it operates. The State impresses upon all new charter schools in Arizona that they are venture capital. Pimeria Alta has to find ways of operating without relying so much on state funding. It is an educational institution, but also a small business.

Difficulty in Networking

This addresses the distance between traditional schools and schools of choice. There is no true networking with the large school districts. According to Ms. Potter, the openness that exists with true networking does not exist. It is difficult to have a network in the traditional sense, because the charter school set-up is individualized. Each charter school goes about their processes in a different way. It is difficult for charter schools to network with traditional school systems if they are not part of a district.

Difficulty in Replicating From Other Schools as Examples

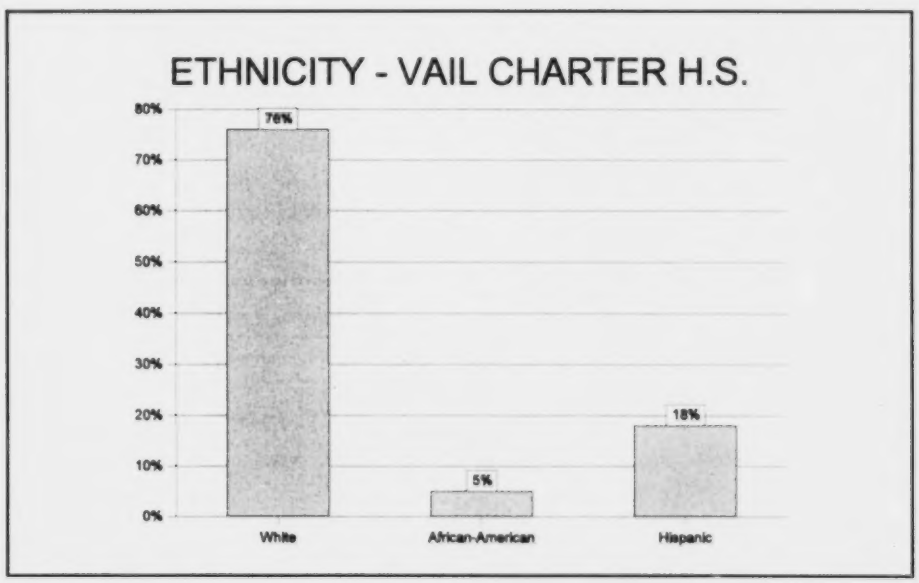
Differences exist in communities, school populations, staff/personnel, capabilities, creativity levels, and many other variables. Implementation involves not replicating, but adapting to the resources already obtained. Even with the same resources, administrators may not have the same school boards willing to go along with the same types of initiatives.

II. Vail Charter High School Debra D'Amore, Head Administrator
STUDENTS
A. Academic Performance Prior to Charter School Entrance

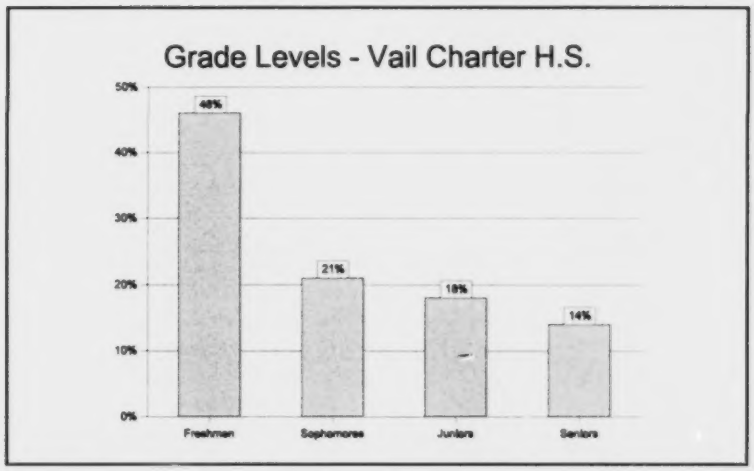
Out of the total population of 99 students, 81 student files were reviewed to determine prior academic performance before entrance to Vail. From that number (81), there were 44 files of male students and 37 files of female students. The mean grade point average of the males was 2.4 on a 4.0 scale. The mean grade point average of the females was 2.55 on a 4.0 scale. The mean grade point average for all 81 students, in reference to prior academic performance before entrance to Vail was 2.48 on a 4.0 scale. There were a total of eight special education students, five males and three females -- and two home schooling students (both male).

B. Characteristics of Student Population

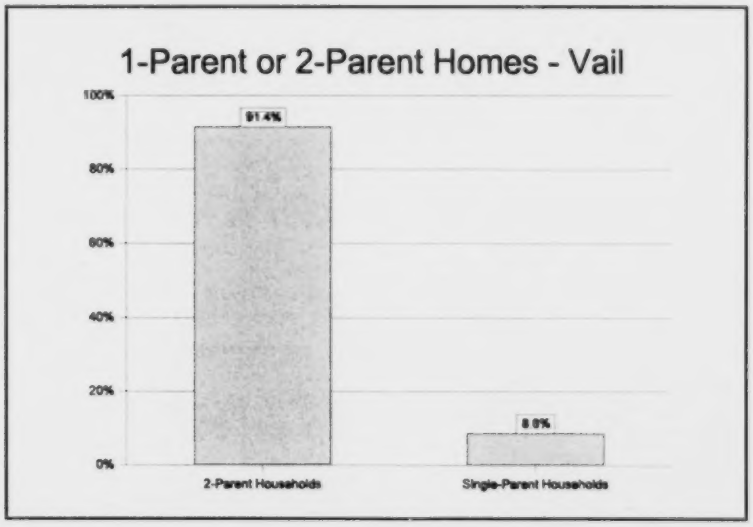
Student population by gender shows 55.5% male, 44.5% female, total population=99. Out of the total number (99), 76 are White, 5 are African-American, and 18 are Hispanic. Out of the total number (99), 46 are freshmen, 21 are sophomores, 18 are juniors, and 14 are seniors. From the 81 student files that were reviewed, 74 students (91.4%) live in two-parent households, and 7 students (8.6%) live in single-parent households. Fifteen percent (15%) of the student population are involved in internships.



BEST COPY AVAILABLE



Out of the total number (99), 46 are freshmen, 21 are sophomores, 18 are juniors, and 14 are seniors.



Out of the 81 student files that were reviewed, 74 students (91.4%) live in two-parent households, and 7 students (8.6%) live in single-parent households.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

As part of the evaluation of Vail Charter High School, a survey was conducted to ascertain incoming students' thoughts and perceptions regarding their career planning and experience. A questionnaire was administered to all students enrolled at Vail Charter High School in the Fall of 1997. A total of 92 students responded. Of the 92 respondents, 61% were male and 39% were female. Over half (67%) indicated that they were White, 16% indicated Hispanic, 6% indicated African-American, and 1% indicated native American. Seven percent (7%) preferred not to answer this question. In total, 47% of the respondents were in the 9th grade, 23% were in the 10th grade, 18% were in the 11th grade, and 12% were in the 12th grade. Some notable results of the survey include the following:

- 70% of the respondents felt that "all jobs are equally good for both men and women."
- 88% indicated that they either know for sure or have some idea about what job or career they want in the future.
- 54% were not sure if courses that related to their career interests were available at their high school.
- 46% of the students in the survey have not taken any courses related to their career interests.
- 65% indicated that their families were 'Very Helpful' in identifying a career interest.
- 50% of the respondents indicated that career guidance offered at school was 'very' or 'Somewhat helpful.'
- When asked what career area they were most interested in, the most popular answer was Engineering/Industrial Systems, followed by Arts, Communications, and Humanities (including things like writing, TV, radio, and photography).

Disciplinary Infractions

As of January 14, 1998, there have been a total of 44 disciplinary infractions since the opening of Vail in August of 1997. These infractions involved a total of 26 students. Of these 26 students, 14 incurred more than one infraction. Nine of these 14 students no longer attend Vail. Out of the total number of 99 students, five students remain with more than one infraction on record.

Since the opening of Vail Charter High School, the following disciplinary infractions have occurred:

- Accessing inappropriate Internet sites
- Disruptive/insubordinate behavior
- Dress Code Violations
- Inappropriate language
- Off campus without permission
- Alcohol possession

C. Reasons for Attending Vail Charter High School

The last section of the questionnaire consisted of some open-ended questions in which students could write responses or comments in their own words. A sample of the most common responses are listed below for the question, 'What was the main reason for choosing Vail Charter High School?'

- I was referred to this school.
- It is close to home.
- I wanted to try something new and felt that it would be a good experience for me.
- So that I could work on an individual basis, and maybe graduate before four years.
- I wanted to try something new.
- I wanted a change of my surroundings.
- Because I know I could do a lot better.
- It is self-paced.
- Because we can work at our own pace and have some help.
- It offered a different way of learning that no other school has, and I liked the individual learning idea.
- I like how there are only 100 students and there is no pressure on us, the teachers really don't pressure us.
- To get a good education without the normal high school distractions.
- It is a serious place where people can take school seriously. And also, people here would want to learn.
- I really wanted the one-on-one time with the teachers. I like the smaller environment.
- I thought of it as an opportunity to find a job in computers.
- To improve grades and focus on my career aspects.
- So that I could participate in concurrent enrollment.
- The school works with the interest of the student and what the student wants.

Based on the responses to this question, there was an indication that the frequent use of computers was very appealing to them. Additionally, several students commented that they were attending Vail Charter High School "because [their] parents made them."

D. Student Expectations

The last section of the questionnaire consisted of some open-ended questions in which students could write responses or comments in their own words. A sample of the most common responses are listed below for the question, 'As a student of Vail Charter High School, what do you expect to gain from attending this school?'

- A good education, good independent work skills, and good people skills.
- A good education and positive skills.
- A better education than the other schools I have been to.
- An education that will prepare me for college.
- To do more computer exploring, and a good education.
- Computer knowledge.
- A career choice.
- Better grades.
- Enough credits to go to the University of Arizona.
- To get better at reading and spelling.
- A better job after I graduate.
- More information because I can go at my own pace.
- Math skills.
- Internship experience and to get ahead in school.
- Independence. More motivation. A good education.
- I expect to gain confidence so I can go out into the world and make a difference.

With regard to the School-to-Work component and student expectations, it has been reported that some freshmen are resistant to School-to-Work, because they feel it is too early for them to start thinking about or considering career options and the world of work.

PARENTS

A. Reasons for Choosing Vail Charter High School

As part of the evaluation of Vail Charter High School, a parent survey was conducted to ascertain the reasons why parents had sent their children to Vail, and to find out what types of expectations the parents held for their children. A questionnaire was administered to 46 parents (N=46) during the Fall of 1997. The questions were open-ended and allowed respondents to give more than one answer per question. The most frequent response as to why parents chose Vail over other schools; small sized school with smaller working groups. The second most frequent response, computer/technology emphasis. The most frequent response as to what parents expect from their child attending Vail; preparation for college. The second most frequent response,

quality education/better education. The following tables illustrate the types of responses and the number count for each response. The responses are ranked in order of frequency, with most frequent first.

What was the main reason for sending your child to Vail Charter High School?

Response	Frequency
Small Size	18
Computer Emphasis/Technology	13
Location	9
Individualized Instruction	7
Change of Environment	5
Student Made the Decision	5
Didn't Like Other High School Choices	3
School-to-Work Program	2
Flexibility of Classes	2
Less Social Temptations	2
Better Preparation for Working World	2
To Bond and Ride Share (works there)	2
Curriculum	2
Heard Good Things of Charter Schools	2
Safety	2
Great Opportunity	2
Stronger Discipline	1
Strict Dress Code	1
Parent Input	1

The Teachers Really Show an Interest	1
Innovation	1

N=46

B. Parent Expectations

As a parent/guardian, what do you expect your child to gain from attending Vail Charter High School?

Response	**Frequency**
College Preparation	11
Quality Education	8
Better Education	8
To Graduate	7
One-on-One Learning	7
Work-Related Environment	6
Computer Literacy	5
Life Preparation	5
Learn Responsibility	3
Independence	3
Better Concentration	2
To Find Out What They Want to Do	2
Enjoy Learning	2
To be Safe	2
Low Stress	1
Opportunity	1

N=46

C. Level of Involvement

After reviewing 81 student files, the degree of parent involvement has been rated by the following: 29 students have been identified as having parents that are highly involved in Vail processes. Twenty six students have parents that are involved at a 'medium' level, and 26 students have parents that are identified as low level involvement. Vail Charter High School has a parent from the site council who is considered the designated "STW Parent." She participates in the Pima County/Santa Cruz Parent Group. Currently, Vail is developing a survey and obtaining information to determine what parents know about the School-to-Work component. The current status on this is that parents seem to know very little.

ADMINISTRATORS

A. Facility

Vail Charter High School is located in the Science and Technology Park with Arizona International Campus (AIC) and many technology based companies such as IBM and Hughes Missile Systems. There are approximately 4000 employees working at the Technology Park in an environment that is completely different from a traditional high school setting. Administrators from Vail and AIC are currently exploring the possibility of sharing resources and classroom space. This would include the opportunity for upper-level students to qualify to take courses from AIC to obtain college credit. AIC is also looking to recruit potential students from the neighboring school. Vail is developing internship evaluations along with cooperating employers. The students keep journals of their internship experiences and develop portfolios, and those students who are employed by IBM and SIDDCO undergo regular employee evaluations.

B. School-to-Work Component

Vail received a mini-grant in 1996 from the Pima/Santa Cruz STW Partnership when the administrators were still at Vail middle school. The mini-grant started the School-to-Work process in the Vail School District. The same teacher who wrote the grant proposal, Madelene Orton, transferred over to the charter school from the middle school largely because of her knowledge and materials about School-to-Work. Ms. Orton became the STW Coordinator and furthered the process along by helping to start the required STW class for the students. Vail also received a half-time STW Liaison through the STW Office. The Liaison works with the teachers at Vail and the business people at the Park to develop internship opportunities and work-study programs. On the curriculum side, Vail has STW specific requirements. Each student must have two credits in STW to graduate. Every student for the first semester has to enroll in an 'Introduction to School-to-Work' class which meets weekly. One of the goals of the school is to have every student involved in an internship before they graduate. Currently, 15% of the student

population is serving internships. The STW Coordinator, Madelene Orton serves many different functions at Vail. Besides writing the mini-grant proposal for the STW component, she also serves as science teacher and counselor. As a former engineer, Orton utilizes prior relationships and connections from the engineering field to bring in real scientists to guest-speak, share information, and lecture about their research projects. Orton emphasizes "authentic activities" geared towards world-of-work realities, and avoids the "career pathway" label -- maintaining that STW is too diverse to be regarded as a 'pathway.'

School-to-Work Partnerships/Network

The following community partnerships are involved with Vail Charter High School and the Pima County School-to-Work Partnership.

- Alstec
- American Forestry Association
- Arizona International Campus
- Center For Law Related Education
- Colossal Cave Mountain Park
- Education Management Group
- Flandrau Science Center
- Fluor Daniel Company
- Fry's Grocery Store
- Harbaugh Designs
- Hearing Innovations
- Hughes Federal Credit Union
- IBM Corporation
- Imation
- International Media
- Junior Solar Sprint
- Keane, Inc.
- M&W Systems
- Moltech
- NASA Center for Excellence
- New Concepts, Inc.
- Old Vail Children's Center
- Old Vail Middle School
- Pima Community College
- Pima County Health Department
- Project GLOBE
- Raytheon
- Rincon General Store

- Rincon Institute
- Rita Ranch Market
- SIDDCO
- University of Arizona's Arid Lands Office
- University of Arizona: Educational Leadership
- University of Arizona: Science Education
- United States Navy Recruiters
- Vail Feed Store
- Veteran's Hospital
- Williamson Mechanical
- Youth Volunteer Center

School-to-Work in Action: First Semester

All 99 students received one half credit in School-to-Work course study (85 students in Career Pathways and 14 students in Intern class). The numbers of students who participated in paid internships include the following: One student obtained an internship at IBM Corporation and three others have been accepted, eight students received internships at SIDDCO, two students interned for the Hughes Federal Credit Union and six more students were accepted, and one paid internship at Moltech totals 12 students who obtained paid internships in the first semester of operation at Vail. Other activities included one job-shadow assignment at University of Arizona's Flandrau Science Center, 15 students attending Star Gazing trips at the University of Arizona, 15 students participating in field trips to Flandrau Science Center, 30 students involved in a field trip to TEP, eight students went to visit Moltech, and five guest speakers for five different classes.

School-to-Work in Action: Second Semester

The numbers of students who participated in internships during the second semester include the following:

- Six paid student internships at SIDDCO
- Two internships at Hughes Federal Credit Union
- One paid internship at Moltech
- Three paid internships at IBM Corporation
- One internship in the Science Department at Pima Community College
- One paid mechanical apprenticeship
- One paid internship at Colossal Cave
- One paid internship at Fry's Grocery

Other activities included the following: Students participating in the Solar Car Club, field trips to Old Tucson Studios, KGUN Television Studios, Hearing Innovations, the Federal Courts for a meeting with Judge Frank Zapata, participation in the Mujeres 2000 Hispanic Culture Club, five guest speakers, and participation in a piloted Computer Career Interest Inventory sponsored by New Concepts.

Early into the second semester of operation at Vail Charter High School, the totals for School-to-Work activities show the following numbers:

- 32 students have participated in internships (17 paid and 5 non-paid).
- 9 field trips related to School-to-Work
- 10 guest speakers relating to School-to-Work
- 2 Art classes conducted by professional artists
- 3 Student Clubs - -
- 1 Career Interest Inventory Test

Vail Charter High School's School-to-Work Center

Vail has set up a School-to-Work Center, which is a designated area inside one of the school's computer labs. The area is enveloped by STW-related visuals and information material. An elaborate, visually catching bulletin board on Career Exploration includes information on business systems, health services, engineering and industrial systems, arts/communications/humanities, natural resources, and social/human services. Each career piece includes the types of characteristics and educational requirements needed for a particular field, types of jobs within each career cluster, and examples of how school curriculum relates to real world application. The Center has a display of successful students who have obtained internships, job-shadowing assignments, and work-study arrangements with companies located at the park. A student recently went on a job-shadow assignment with an astronomer at the University of Arizona Flandrau Science Center. The astronomer provided the student with information on what curriculum to take to be an astronomer. The student reported back exclaiming, "I can do this!"

The Center also includes a college preparation area that includes information on some of the following:

College Financial Aid Information

- Grants/Scholarships
- Loans/Work Study
- Campus Employment

Appropriate Courses to Take in High School That Will Prepare You for College
"How to Get Accepted"
- Conditional and Unconditional Acceptance

Application Processes for the U of A, NAU, ASU, and PCC
- Testing Office Information
- General education requirements and credit hours needed.
- Applications for admission and scholarships.

Information on How to Pay for College
- Scholarships and Waivers
- Grants/Loans
- College Work Study
- Campus Employment

Freshmen/Transfer Student Checklists
- Provides phone numbers for specific offices in each college
- Much more information not mentioned here

Helping Students Realize Their Potential: A Case in Point

Vail's School-to-Work Coordinator and Science Instructor, Madelene Orton, writes of a student's experience that illustrates the capacity of School-to-Work to help students realize their potential. The student's name is Jessica, and she participated in a pilot job-shadowing program at Vail Charter School and is now passionate about pursuing a career in Astronomy.

In her School-to-Work 'Career Exploration' course, Jessica was encouraged to explore two careers in-depth, comparing each in the context of her own abilities and interests. After careful consideration, she chose postal work as her first choice because it was a career shared by many of her family members, and she figured she had the right connections to land a job. She also chose to look into careers related to Astronomy because it was one of her hobbies, but expressed reservations about it being a practical pursuit. One of her duties for the School-to-Work course was to outline the steps needed to gain the necessary skills and credentials for each job.

Ms. Orton arranged for the student to job-shadow Dimo Galanos, one of the telescope operators at the Flandrau Science Center on the University of Arizona campus. Jessica spent four hours one evening learning about careers in astronomy and planetary science while operating the 16 inch Cassegrain telescope. She was taught how to open and position the observatory dome as well as how to focus on particular objects in the heavens. She was also taught how to read several computer-generated planetary positioning charts, and successfully located Mars, Venus, Saturn, and Jupiter.

Mr. Galanos spoke with Jessica about his own career as an aeronautical engineer and gave her insight about the courses she would need to study to be competitive in the field. He advised her to take as many math and science courses as were offered, and suggested electives in optics, computer science, and remote sensing. He introduced her to two undergraduate students studying Astronomy with whom she could discuss degree requirements and university course offerings. Mr. Galano also gave Jessica a pile of reading materials, star-charts and photographs to study, and offered to mentor her through her current Astronomy course.

Jessica came away from the job-shadowing experience with a new sense of confidence that she could synthesize her passion for Astronomy and her aptitude for math and science into a career. She has since applied for a scholarship to attend the University of Arizona's astronomy summer camp on Mount Lemmon, has signed up for an extra correspondence course at the University, and is actively seeking summer employment in the remote-sensing lab at the NASA Center for Excellence.

Now, Jessica realizes that she can do it. Furthermore, she has a detailed educational plan to outline the steps needed to reach her goals and a new 'connection' in the world with whom to network. The School-to-Work job-shadowing experience has allowed Jessica an opportunity to explore her place in the universe and the confidence to reach for the stars (M.Orton, M.A., Science Instructor and School-to-Work Coordinator, 1998).

C. Support Network - Questions and Answers with Debra D'Amore

Is there any interaction between your school and other charter schools in the form of a support network, or with other members of the Pima/Santa Cruz STW Partnership?

There is an association for charter schools. I attended one of those meetings. At that meeting, State people came down to lend some support and share ideas with all of the people running and starting up charter schools. I've called several, visited others. Charter schools are real open to sharing ideas. We talk freely, and lend support to each other -- because the support is not there when you go back to the traditional system. But essentially, each charter is unique, individual, and different from other charters -- each doing different things.

Is there any type of community network?

Our community is this park. Everybody gets together monthly or every other month to share ideas, network, work together towards common goals.

What does an employer consider most about the STW student, when arranging for and considering internships or employment?

They want each student to have a resume. They look at their ability to write and put their

thoughts down on paper. During the interview process, they look at students who can communicate verbally and do it well. They don't look so much at GPA or performance evaluations as much as written and verbal skills through the interview process.

To what extent are the colleges and universities involved in the STW component, if at all?

We offer concurrent enrollment with Arizona International Campus to students. We are connecting with Pima College and their Career Guidance Center, and hooking up with the U of A and their Career STW offerings.

What kind of businesses and/or trades have been most responsive to the STW approach?

Employers are finding a dwindling pool of applicants with the proper skills. People are interviewing with a lack of the necessary skills. So businesses around the area are realizing that it is to their advantage to get involved in the shaping of and working with the students. The kinds of businesses that Vail has found as very approachable are the high-tech businesses. High-tech businesses seem to be very supportive of the charter school approach.

Is there an administrator that's more directly responsible for STW decisions or is it a general responsibility for everyone?

Our goal is that everybody is responsible in promoting and getting involved. Right now it's a small team effort with a STW Coordinator, a STW Liaison, and a parent making decisions. We want STW to be our program, not yours or mine. Our ultimate goal is that every adult on campus is involved in STW.

D. Replication Potential - Q and A with Debra D'Amore

What can you discuss about the STW replicating effect for others who want to take your approach?

Success of charter schools lay in having support systems, and when your sponsored by a district, all of those support systems are built in -- as opposed to Bill and Sally opening one in a mall somewhere that's not connected. So I would encourage people opening a charter school to be sponsored by their local district. Regarding STW and charter schools with people who want to operate with a strong STW component, work slowly. We've found there's a huge gap between the corporate world and the education world -- and both have assumptions and most are incorrect. So it takes time to build relationships and develop them carefully.

E. Barriers

Bureaucracy/Paperwork

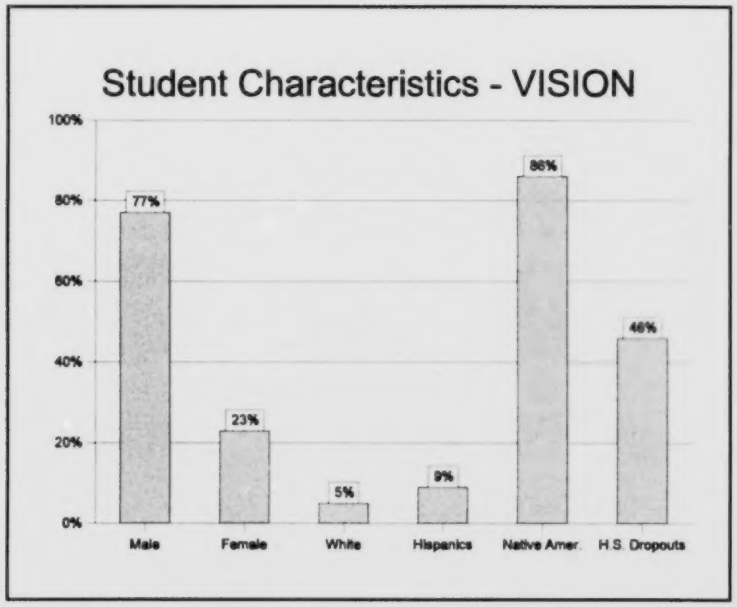
There is a lot of bureaucracy and paper work involved with opening a charter school. Vail plans to have a process that enables new businesses and employers to come in, get involved in a way that brings them in smoothly without complicating things. The administrators have found that it's better to keep internship/employment opportunities separate, whereby students have the choice between different businesses to become involved. Once they involve themselves in that one area, they don't participate in several different areas. This avoids potential complication between the school and the other businesses involved. The employers want to see loyalty from their interns -- especially from students who are getting paid and are actually employed. Employers (the big ones - IBM, Hughes, etc.) want to see loyalty from the start.

Bureaucracy also involved processes in dealing with the State in opening the charter school. State charter school laws vary enormously and they can also change. New laws are adopted and existing laws are modified often. Administrators had to become familiar with the state process that is used to analyze and approve the charter school proposal. Information had to be obtained regarding funds the state legislature had allocated and what the state received from the federal government to help them plan and start the school. Other barriers include the following:

- People from all positions (including state people) holding negative images of charter schools e.g., a refuge for troubled kids, poor quality of education, fly-by-night operations etc. This also brought up questions on validity of the curriculum, transfer of credits, and credentials of teachers.
- Finding the right facility and issues of legal requirements to open and maintain the facility e.g., fire codes etc.
- Finding staff that was not only accepting of the charter school idea, but able to teach in that type of environment.
- During the period of adjustment for Vail which was particularly intense during the first semester, it, like Pimeria Alta, also faced the possibility of heading in an unforeseen direction which was influenced by intangible forces. As mentioned earlier, these forces are a culmination of many processes which can sway the originally intended direction of the school. Opposition by an array of education groups, educational bureaucracy, local and state politics, staff turn-over, community perceptions, and other barriers tended to distract specific areas of focus for the school. For all of these reasons, the period of adjustment for Vail is a constant process.

III. Vision Charter High School Dr. Wilma Soroosh, Head Administrator
STUDENTS
A. Characteristics of Student Population

The total student population as of early 1998 is 35 (N=35). There are 27 males and 8 females. The ages of the students range from 13 to 18. Division of ethnicity reveals the following: 30 Native Americans (86%), 3 Hispanics (9%), and 2 Whites (5%). Out of the total student number of 35, there are 16 high school drop-outs (46%). Out of those 16 drop-outs, 13 are male, and 3 are female. Division of ethnicity among the drop-outs reveal the following: 13 Native Americans, 2 Hispanics, and 1 White. Grade levels range from 8th grade to 11th, with the majority of students in the 9th grade (15 students at 43%). Categories of grade level show the following: 7 students in the 8th grade, 15 students in the 9th grade, 2 students in the 10th grade, 2 students in the 11th grade, and 9 students show no record of grade level. Ten students live in two-parent households, 9 students live in single-parent households, 2 students live on their own, and 14 provided no information on that category. There were five students that provided information on prior academic performance. The grade point averages range from 3.0 to .5 (on a 4.0 scale). The mean grade point average between the five students is 2.1 (on a 4.0 scale). Information on student characteristics reveal that some students are attending because of the School-to-Work component, and some have admitted to attendance problems and academic problems.



BEST COPY AVAILABLE

B. Reasons for Attending Vision Charter High School

Personalized attention and direct face-to-face contact are the overwhelming reasons as to why students have been interested. The computerized curriculum is also appealing -- particularly with the Native American students. Vision High School administrators believe that for many of the Native American students that have applied, they tend to get lost in the big numbers of a public school setting because they are inclined not to ask a lot of questions -- and this is how they fall behind. They avoid calling attention to themselves. Vision administrators feel their computerized curriculum will match well with this type of student/cultural learning style. The computerized curriculum offers instant feedback. They will not have to call attention to themselves and announce to the class that they are stuck on a problem. In a computerized curriculum, the students work through problems, and the system tracks their progress. If they are having a problem with a specific step, the computer instantly tells them and will not let them move on until they solve it. The system also gives them different methods to solve the same problem. It is not a setting where they have to raise their hand and announce to the teacher and class that they do not understand. Regular teachers and lab teachers will be there to supplement the state of the art technology (Pentium systems, Internet access, etc.)

Another aspect of the school that appeals to the students is the type of classes and languages that are offered. Students have the opportunity to take classes in Native American languages like Yaqui or Tohono O'odham -- languages of the two local tribal nations. The somewhat culturally specific approach is very appealing to the students. They feel that the cultural aspect through language, and incorporating a lot of the story telling and traditions is very important. It gives them the sense that they have more options to choose from.

Vision administrators assert that personal attention is the strongest part of their appeal, based on their own research in trying to find out why students were pulling out of the traditional public schools. They found that it was largely because of non-academic reasons. Many students were experiencing problems at home. The administrators feel that they and their staff are in the position to refer students to the appropriate counseling, become true friends to the students, and be aware of how each individual student is doing. Another non-academic reason, to the surprise of Vision administrators, was safety. During student/parent interviews, students would express a genuine fear for their safety at public schools. Personal attention, small class size and personal safety were the big considerations for students interested in attending Vision High School.

C. Expectations of Students

The majority of the students are at a lower level of an educational foundation with which to work. In mathematics for example, a significant portion of the nine through 12th graders are at the fifth grade level. The students are looking for smaller classes and a more comfortable atmosphere in order to up-grade their educational levels.

PARENTS

A. Reasons for Choosing Vision High School

Most parents Dr. Soroosh talked to were very supportive of the School-to-Work philosophy. The concept of exposing students to careers, job shadowing, and work experience seem to be ideal in the parents' minds. Reasons expressed for the interest by parents include the following:

- Student's exposure to occupations are limited.
- Higher Education is not a reality for many of Vision's disadvantaged families.
- Many of the future students of Vision prefer to be out of the classroom, rather than in, using their hands and minds, without the classroom structure that they find limited and unrewarding.
- The General Education pathway has not proven to benefit high school graduates.
- College Prep is often intimidating for many of the future students of Vision because they have no role models or support system.
- Many of the students know that their high school has not academically prepared them for higher education regardless of their grades.
- Financially, most of the students must have a job to help support their family.

B. PARENT ATTITUDES/EXPECTATIONS

Through the Pima/Santa Cruz County School-to-Work Partnership, Vision High School was provided a mini-grant to sponsor a series of workshops whereby parents, students, and the surrounding community were invited. Once the parents had heard about what Vision was doing and their plans to open a charter school, they joined the initiative and became very supportive. When Vision suffered the realization of a seven month delay for its opening date, all of the parents had to be contacted and informed. Vision administrators anticipated that parents would be disappointed and rebuff Vision's idea for a new school. The parents were disappointed but indicated adamantly that they would still be there for the opening in July (1998). When Dr. Soroosh conducted the parent/student interviews and talked about the school, the philosophy, how the classes would be arranged, the block scheduling, the computerized curriculum, and tapping into individual students' learning styles, the parents showed 'genuinely enthusiastic

interest' without knowing where the school would be located. The location of the school was not an initial concern for the parents. After hearing of the school's approach towards learning, education, and individual student needs, the parents expressed an attitude of, 'wherever you are located, we are going to be there.' When they were told that the school would be located at the Desert Vista campus of Pima Community College, they became 'ecstatic.' After the announcement of the seven month opening date delay, Vision has yet to lose any parents intending to enroll. Parents are looking for an alternative education program and have expressed the following reasons and expectations:

- Safe environment
- Small class size
- Culturally sensitive program
- Remedial program
- To avoid negative peer pressure
- School-to-Work component

C. PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Parents will be involved in the School-to-Work component in the following ways:

- Asking their employer for job shadowing and work experience sites.
- Being a guest speaker at Vision High School to talk about their work experience and career.
- Being a part of their child's decision.
- Volunteer for two hours per month.
- Reinforce academic skills and concepts at home.
- Participate in family assignments.
- Respond to monthly progress reports.
- Meet with the curriculum teacher and student each semester.
- Participate in a Family Service Plan.

ADMINISTRATORS

A. Facility/Curriculum

The Tucson Indian Center (TIC) founded in 1957 and incorporated in 1963, is a non-profit 501 (C) community-based organization with a history of operating educational programs, including programs in: pre-school, youth and adult GED classes, high school tutoring and career guidance, adult basic education, vocational training, and youth and adult work experience. Pima Community College and the Tucson Indian Center are currently working out an agreement for co-enrolling students in the Center for Training and Development and Pima Community College courses on the Desert Vista campus. The Center for Training and Development focuses on

preparing students for the work force and utilizes area business connections.

When the administrators for Vision High School prepared their application, they did not want to create a school strictly for drop-outs or troubled youth. Their intent was to create a first-class school that would maintain high academic standards in which parents would be required to participate. This was not to be an easy ride for the students. They would have to come ready, willing, and able to fully engross themselves in acclimating to the school. Administrators recognized that the Tucson Indian Center was somewhat limited in its abilities to deliver services because TIC is a relatively small social service agency. They began a self-assessment and searched for a partner that could help them start a charter school. During the process, various corporations, the University of Arizona, and different organizations were mentioned. But the name that kept popping up over and over again was Pima Community College (PCC). During the workshops that were sponsored by School-to-Work, PCC representatives spoke up and urged Vision administrators to consider PCC.

Vision administrators then looked back into their records and found that the school TIC had the most success with in Tucson was the Center for Training and Development (CTD) at the PCC Desert Vista campus. The Tucson Indian Center, when sending their JTPA participants to various vocational schools found that the CTD had the highest average for students finishing the program and getting a job. Vision administrators looked into the CTD process further and found that they deliver personalized service. If a trainee fails to show up, CTD immediately phones a vocational monitor, who then notifies the TIC, in which administrators consequently look into it. Vision administrators feel that the CTD genuinely care for the students. For these reasons, Pima Community College and the Center for Training and Development on the Desert Vista campus seemed the obvious choice for TIC/Vision administrators.

Initially, Vision administrators thought that building space was not a problem because in their original proposal they were going to buy a modular re-locator building and place it on campus. But PCC's latest Bond Election had somewhat of a re-direction and re-focus in which many of the programs became re-consolidated and re-located to the Desert Vista campus. Suddenly, space became a problem. Due to PCC's bond and bond agreements, the college received monies to implement permanent structures. After several months of negotiations PCC became resistant to placing re-locatable buildings on campus.

This would turn out to be a blessing in disguise for Vision administrators, because the spirit and intent of their application was to demonstrate that their students could interact with college students on campus, and that that experience would influence Vision High School students -- getting them to think about what they want to do after high school. To be inside of a permanent structure on campus would be a way to light a fire under them. So it became very

important to Vision administrators to incorporate -- to show their students the non-credit side of Pima Community College. The students would sit side-by-side in the same classrooms as the credit students, attend the same lectures and take the same tests. The academic student gets college credit towards their degree, and the CTD student would get credit towards the vocational side. As the process expands to include high school students they would be treated the same. The high school students can take PCC courses in sequential degree programs. They would receive credits for high school and college. At the same time, they would be rubbing elbows with college students, talking about what they are going to do after school etc. The rationale being that, when a high school student starts hanging around college people, they start thinking about college or some other type of education/training -- what Vision administrators refer to as a 'seamless education' to counter the existing gap in transition from high school to college in a lot of students. The students would already be familiar with the facilities, schedules, cafeteria, bus routes, teachers, etc. -- a seamless transition.

Vision High School's Mission is to serve the general student population by providing a cross-cultural comprehensive teaching and learning environment that empowers students to become life-long learners and contributing community members. Vision's theme is Victory - Incentive - Security - Initiative - Opportunity - Nurturing.

Vision plans a comprehensive program of instruction. The core curriculum will meet Arizona Standard Requirements and will be offered in progressive blocks of language arts, mathematics, science, history, and social studies. Students will work in traditional classroom settings with certified teachers and aids. To accommodate different learning styles, students will be taught through lectures, group discussions and activities, computer-based assignments, and workforce experience. Certified teachers, parents, and specialists from the community will mentor each student individually to implement an Individual Education Plan (IEP) which will take into consideration each student's special needs, talents, and learning styles.

Student support functions will be set up in such a way, whereby Vision High School administrators, teachers and staff will be required to do the following:

- Meet with each student on an individual basis several times throughout the semester.
- Provide one-on-one assistance to students as needed.
- Serve as a mentor to several students.
- Being available to meet with parents and guardians within 48 hours of request.
- Stay active in the community.
- Help students foster a sense of personal meaning.
- Help students foster requisites for adult success.

B. School-to-Work Component

Educational Pathways

Students will be able to select from four educational pathways: General Education, School-to-Work, Vocational Prep, and College Bound.

- General Education gives students the opportunity to take the required credits identified by the State Board of Charter Schools as requirements of graduation. Additionally, as part of the General Education program, students will be required to participate in a Work Experience or Job Shadowing experience.
- School-to-Work combines academic classes with hands-on learning and training in the work place. Program requirements include the Technology Foundation, and Employability I & II courses, plus the student will have to choose between Business, Public Service, Technology or Health Career path.
- Vocational Prep combines academic and vocational classes at school and prepares students for higher education or vocational programs beyond high school graduation. Students will select from a Health Occupation, Business, Food Service, or Industrial career pathways.
- College Bound will prepare students for academic success in higher education.

All four career pathways will integrate Learning-Based, Workforce-Based, and Connecting activities that will utilize classroom and on-the-job instruction. Additionally, all students will be required to take the following course work: Study Skills, Life Skills, and Career Exploration and participate in a Work Experience or Job Shadowing Program.

C. SUPPORT NETWORK

Vision administrators report that one of the more positive experiences in the process of starting a charter school has been the support they have received from other charter schools. It has been what they refer to as a 'non-competition issue' -- a collaborative process rather than a competitive one. Before Vision administrators submitted their proposal, they called up other charter schools to tell them what their intent was. Support by other charter schools were expressed with invitations. Vision administrators proceeded to visit five charter schools. They were taken in, were introduced to staff, discussed philosophies, were informed of the processes that went right and wrong, received advice on what Board to apply to, were given handbooks, information on how to set up their accounting systems, and any other information they wanted to obtain. Community support is expected to emerge in various forms, some of which include the following:

- Mentors
- Work experience and job shadowing opportunities

- Services and activities related to social and environmental issues as vehicles to acquire, apply, and practice skills related to concepts learned in the classroom
- guest speakers

D. BARRIERS

Opening a Charter School is Extremely Labor and Capital Intensive

Potential operators have to be ready with enough capital to be prepared for those unexpected costs. Many times there are delays in the approval of the application for a charter school. According to Vision High School administrators, even with the stimulus funds and initial equalization payments that charter schools receive, a substantial portion of capital from the very beginning is imperative. According to information provided by participants of charter school workshops in the area, one of the more pervasive problems that Southern Arizona charter schools have encountered is maintaining a proper facility that conforms to building code requirements for educational facilities. Code requirements for educational facilities are much more stringent than codes for other building types e.g., office buildings. Some examples include specific fire codes, wider hallways, wider doors, intricate heavy-duty sprinkler systems and more -- all of which is very capital intensive.

Growing Concern

According to Dr. Soroosh, determining who is responsible for Urban Indians' Public Education is difficult. In the opinion of Vision administrators, the roles of the federal, state, and tribal governments are unclear. While some educational services may be duplicated, other fundamental, vital educational services are totally ignored. The community needs to work together to make Indian education the best it can be.

Lack of Understanding from the State Board of Charter Schools

A big hurdle to overcome for Vision High School was the lack of understanding the State Board for Charter Schools had about the Tucson Indian Center and how they are funded, the structure of their resources, and the unique situations Native American students are faced with in the public school system. Other barriers include the following:

- Coordinating the start-up efforts without funds.
- The Tucson Indian Center lacked the understanding of how the State Board for Charter Schools operates.
- Vision lacked the network system that educational institutions take for granted.
- Being one of the first non-profit organizations to apply for a Charter School license.

Walking the Fine Line Between Alternative and Traditional

One of the things Vision High School administrators had learned during the process was that although charter school administrators are encouraged to be innovative and creative in their new approach to education, their institution is still a public school. People starting a charter school do not operate with a 'clean slate.' Administrators still have many limitations on the types of activities in which they are engaged. Even though charter school administrators may have a different twist to their methodologies, philosophies, and approaches to education, they are still dealing with the traditional bureaucratic side of education. It is walking a fine line between a school that is supposed to be alternative and innovative with different expectations according to various student populations, and yet maintaining public school regulations -- they are different but still the same. Administrators have the freedom with their approach towards education in terms of teaching styles, but still have to meet a great number of standards set by the State Department of Education e.g., forms, student counts, equalization pay, etc. The curriculum, methodology, and philosophy have to be aligned with the State Department of Education.

Formatting the Application Correctly

Having 30 years of experience applying for grants, contracts, federal and state funds, the Tucson Indian Center had some difficulty arranging the application according to the Department of Education guidelines. In Vision's application, the spirit and intent was to show how all of the components would work together. In their original application, Vision included what they describe as the 'whole picture' -- what the Tucson Indian Center would be doing, what the Department of Education would be doing, the charter school, JTPA, the match between all of the components, the partnering etc. When the Department of Education evaluates a proposal, success of the application depends more directly on the financial budget that pertains to the Department. Vision was too specific on how all of the components would come together. The Department is interested in what one is applying for, what monies from the Department are being sought, and how the services are going to be provided. As a result, Vision had to go back and completely change their application.

SUMMARY

There are many similarities between charter schools and the STW concept, in terms of the rationale used for their existence and in the way both concepts address increased community involvement, accountability, choice and options.

- Both charter schools and STW are rooted in current public sentiment, that many young people are ill-prepared to enter the work force and don't have the appropriate skills to keep our economy competitive in an increasingly global market.
- Both charter schools and STW address the concern of how to make communities more responsible for preparing their children for the future, and how to change the school structure to enable students to reach their goals.
- Charter schools offer the flexibility in structure to accommodate STW activities such as job-shadowing, job site internships, co-op work experiences, and employment.
- Both operate on the belief that curriculums should link learning to the world beyond the classroom, and both allow students to explore ideas based on their own interests.
- Both operate on the basis of team-work, partnership governance, and working with the community.
- Charter schools have a contract for results. They have to show improved student achievement, or they close down. STW systems can aid in observed and documented progress through concerted partnerships with communities, businesses, and many types of organizations. Collective engagement will provide more evidence of accountability on all sides.
- The programs and organizations of charter schools and STW systems are locally designed by those who operate them.
- Both are fundamentally about creating opportunities.
- Both attempt to combine academics with work-related effort in tangible products.
- Both give students options and choices.

References

Bierlein, L., and Mullholland, L. (1994). The promise of charter schools. Educational Leadership, 52, (1), 34-40.

Diamond, L. (1994). A progress report on California's charter schools. Educational Leadership, 52, (1), 41-45.

Hess, M.A. (1997). School-to-Work: Linking learning to livelihoods. Curriculum Update, Fall, 1997, 1-7 .

Kolderie, T. (1994). Charters: An invitation to change. Educational Leadership, 52, (3), 36-40.

Lueker, D.H. (1994). Charter schools: Another ho-hum reform, or a genuine reformation thumping on your schoolhouse door? The American School Board Journal, 9, 22-26.

Raywid, M.A. (1994). Alternative schools: The state of the art. Educational Leadership, 52, (1), 26-31.

Nathan, J. (1996). Charter schools: Creating hope and opportunity for American education. (1rst ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Rickreil, T. (1994). Public education-related bills, 1994 special session, Arizona School Administrators, 1-7.

Sweeney, M.E. (1994). How to plan a charter school. Educational Leadership, 52, (1), 46-47.

Willis, S. (1997). Debating charter schools: Will they revitalize or undermine public education? Education Update, 39, (5), 1,4,5,8.

Appendix A: Transcript of Interview With Sandra Potter

What has School-to-Work done to support your school?

They've given us the opportunity and confidence to go ahead with ventures that I would have postponed until the fourth or fifth year of operation. A big part of that is Jodi Horton. If the STW Coalition can't find the money or ways to help, she finds other people to help us. So she has been a real good resource for our STW program. Her personnel are always understanding when we couldn't get reports in on time because we were new and busy, and learning it the hard way. But the emotional support, and the confidence they showed in us -- and the eagerness they had to give us full reign to see where we could go, was a huge help.

Financial support gave us support to initiate our programs. We would not have our Nursing Program at the level it is, or our Law Enforcement Program, or our cottage industry with our Art Program at the levels we started, if we did not have that extra financial support from the mini-grants that I wrote and that are funded by STW. We were able to start up our CNA (Nursing) Program, and that has extended to our physical therapy aid also. It has extended to having five community members in each cohort that goes through the program. And it has also set us up very nicely in the community. What has started as one major partner, Carondelet, we now have 12 health partners that share in the activities, expenses, etc. of the program.

We also received financial support to start up our Law Enforcement Program by getting us a STW Liaison whom I stole from a community organization here in town. Clarisa is absolutely wonderful. She is a true community Liaison. She knows everyone, she knows who does what, who can get what. She has made tremendous strides in our Law Enforcement Program.

In our Nursing Program, our first person passed her State Certification test (one of our graduates), and she passed. She took the test right before Christmas (1997). So we have a real success story here. This was a pregnant girl who came to us to finish her diploma. All she was concerned about was getting her diploma. She now has a beautiful baby, and she has an offer from Mariposa Health Clinic in Nogales, to start at $7.00 an hour as a certified Nursing Assistant. Instead of staying at Burger King at minimum wage, she can now support her child. And now she's looking at extending her education and going on to college -- which she never considered before. She realizes now that she can do it, she can do it. That is an inspiration to the students who are still in the program. Some are near completion and working towards taking the test. Some of the new cohort kids have been lacking in attendance etc. because they really didn't think it was going anywhere. Now, she is a real inspiration to them -- 'Look, she can do it, so I can do it.' So STW is very important overall to our school because it keeps our kids here everyday, it keeps them off the street, and it gives them hope.

Another good thing, because a lot of times young people go into a training program, and they've received their financing, so they feel locked into that, and they find out, 'Gee, I really don't want to do this.' STW provides students the opportunity to realize that a particular occupation is not what they want to do. STW provided the vehicle for these young people to be excited about school, to look at life-long learning, and to feel a sense of accomplishment about themselves.

Another STW component, the STW Liaison that we got from our second STW mini-grant, Clarisa, her contacts with the Community Vocational Education Center here in town, which is a city grant, they have provided a way for our students to do the curriculum here in carpentry and building trades, and to go the other half of the day to the Community Voc. Ed. Center to participate with certified teachers in a voc. ed. program there. The students work with real carpenters, contractors, real building-trades people, and diesel mechanics as well. Two students are working and have finished apprenticeships. They've worked through some kind of certificate, showing that they have gone through some actual union apprenticeship in carpentry and diesel mechanics. So these are young men, working men who have been in detention, in and out of trouble and schools, young adults who have been literally unschooled until they came here. And this is one of the things that keeps them coming everyday. And the self-esteem they have now is awesome.

It's one of our goals in the Charter, when I wrote the Charter, is to build self-esteem in students in a community that thought very little of itself. And yet we had various strategies to do this. One of course is the Arts Program which has been a great help. Having started STW right away, our Art Program immediately became part of STW because as the students produced their products in clay and stained glass, they have had to take the STW Curriculum on NovaNet -- which is the business curriculum and how to do sales and marketing, financial services and all of that. So STW has tied in beautifully with our Arts Program. The students have their own fund now, their own account from generating funds. Fifty percent of their profit goes to the student who manufactured the product, and 50% goes back into the Arts Program. So that enthusiasm for entrepreneurship -- this has helped them realize that what they learn in the curriculum is relevant -- learning business practices. So STW has really brought relevance to the instructional curriculum for students, who before never thought it was important to know that.

When we opened this school, it was impressed upon all charter school operators that charter schools are venture capital. The State looks at them that way. They are a business. Find a way to support your business. If the State shut down for whatever reason, or we didn't have money coming in for a particular month, we have to find a way to continue to operate. It's not like the traditional schools where you would have to just shut down. So whether STW supports us financially, they have other connections to assist us in other ways -- so we're going to go

forward anyway. It sort of has become this self-propelling agency throughout our system. In our system we give a pretest, which is the ABLE (Adult Basic Learning Exam), then when the student has completed their work for the year or quarter (whenever they leave us), we give them that test again to see what their progress has been. We've had 8 students complete their requirements for a diploma this previous quarter, and when they took the test again, we were amazed at the difference in where they were now compared to their results a year before, as far as their English skills and basic math skills. And of those 8 students, 6 of them were involved with STW programs. People who say STW takes students away from their academic focus, or is an addition to the academic program -- it is not. It is an integral part of your program, it can't be separate.

Why is STW investing money in your school?

I think they're investing in our school because we have an energy and enthusiasm that they wanted to catch. We're new. I think that's a big reason. We're new and they're new. So we could grow with them and they could grow with us. And we follow through. That's important too. We integrate STW, it's part of us and what we do, instead of an "activity" for the students to do on a temporary basis or some add-on component. It is integrated totally.

Why are your students/parents choosing your school over other schools?

I interview every parent and student that comes here, and one of the questions I always ask is, "Why are you here instead of another school?" There are several answers. The ones that withdraw, not suspended but withdraw from other schools to come here -- instead of going to another traditional school system they come here, and I ask why. Mainly the answers I get is that: (a) there are too many kids in the class, (b) discipline is non-existent if it exists at all, (c) there's too many drugs and too much fighting, (d) the principal does not show respect for my child, (e) the teachers don't seem to get along, (f) there's no agreement from classroom to classroom, (g) the curriculum seems to be very difficult or very easy, it's either too hard or too easy. These are all typical parent responses. I listen to them, but those are not the real reasons. Parents are bringing their kids here, I believe, and from what we hear from the kids is that, "My brother told me, my cousin told me, my friend told me, my neighbor told me..." They hear what their friends and relatives do here, so they want to be here. We have a safe, comfortable, warm, intimate environment.

It is an extended family. In a time in society when family people are all working or no one's working -- when there's an excessive amount of abuse in the community, from alcohol, drugs, and domestic violence, students need a safe place to go. We don't yell at our kids, we don't humiliate them, we treat them as human beings. They have to own up to what they've done. If they've been in detention, probation, suspended or expelled, they have to rectify their situation or they don't get in here. And then we close that door and start over again. A lot of them, their

parents have finally come around and confided that their kid has a reputation in their former school, so they want their kid to have a fresh start. So I think one big reason is fresh start. Also, if they're suspended or expelled, the probation department or the judge refers them to our school. Our schedule is flexible. Many of the students at the high school level have to work, either because they have families or they're supporting the whole family. And the schedule in traditional systems does not adapt to meet those types of needs for students. Over 60% of our students were working full-time this last quarter. They can earn credits through STW and through diversified work programs that we have here. And because of our split schedule, the employers are more than willing to work with us on rescheduling their hours. We have an open, entry-exit program. That means when a student comes in, they start at the level that they're at that day. We don't have to say to a student, "You're too late to take the Freshman English class, you have to start it next year." No. The student comes in, we test them, and then work on an individual plan for that student, that day. And so the student starts right where they belong. And they keep going at their own pace.

Another one, is that the students know that the staff likes being here. We survey the kids every year in the Spring. We give them a survey to fill out on questions about, 'Why are you here? Why are you still here? Why do you keep coming? What do you like best about the school? What do we need to improve on?' etc. Invariably, the kids will say, 'It's nice here' or 'It's safe here.' But almost all of them say 'The staff respects me.' And that has become a major issue in society. And it is a major issue with young people that age. So the respect issue is one of the major responses for why they're here.

What are the attitudes of the parents?

When I first started teaching, there were always parents around willing to do anything. but in the last 10 years that has really dwindled. It has been mostly hostility and frustration that you get from the parents. We've seen a real positive bent with parents now. This idea that some people have, that parents don't care anymore about their kids -- it's not true. They care deeply about their children. It's that often times, they've tried everything that they know, and they know there's another choice now. But they're afraid of it because we're an unknown. I'll ask parents who referred them to us, and they'll tell me that the principle at 'such and such' school suggested that maybe their child would do better in a smaller, more open environment. Now, the principles at other schools have seen it work for kids here who were not successful in their schools. And that's the purpose of charter schools. That's the purpose of STW, as both reform methods.

Why this particular format/curriculum/location?

The curriculum has computer-assisted instruction through NovaNet. The national headquarters for NovaNet is in Tucson. We have our own curriculum coordinator through that company, who has aligned all of our curriculum with the state standards. The STW program that

we use on their curriculum was developed by Dr. Karen Newman and Melinda Rinde. Melinda is our NovaNet curriculum consultant. Dr. Newman is the education consultant who developed the four state levels of voc. ed. -- she developed our STW program on NovaNet with Melinda. So we have level one, two, and three on our computers, and level four being the actual work experience. We have high-quality curriculum content. Plus we have the right people. We have certified teachers teach the curricular classroom part -- but the components of the STW curriculum, we have practitioners teaching that. The carpenter teaches carpentry, the nurse teaches nursing, a police officer teaches law enforcement -- and that's what makes it work. We tried it the other way (the traditional system), the young people don't take you seriously. Plus you don't have the contacts, the network, the background -- and it's best to have actual practitioners teach. So they are an integral part of our school. Our flexibility allows for all of this. You can't do this in a traditional system.

Is there any interaction between your school and other charter schools or with other members of the Pima/Santa Cruz STW Partnership in the form of a support network?

At Vail Charter School, Debra and I have done a lot. We've had people come and visit. Then they go back and do their thing -- take pieces of ours that they can apply. but there isn't a lot of it. Part of it is, I think because STW is a necessity that it becomes individualized within each school. It's difficult to have a network in the traditional sense, because it is so individualized. This is especially so with charter schools because each charter school goes about it in a different way. It's difficult for charter schools to network with traditional school systems if they're not part of a district -- because they see us as competition rather than collaborators.

Is there any type of community network?

Your staff is your community network and your community organizations. We go to community organization meetings regularly because you've got to keep your hand in those, and each one of us talks about STW constantly. I went to a Rotary meeting and talked there about four or five months ago. There were a couple of ministers there and business people. Now, they"re bringing their kids here. They've thought about it, they've checked us out. And these are very traditional people. And they're not happy (with the traditional system). So they're bringing their kids here. This also brings up the distance between traditional schools and schools of choice. There isn't true networking with the large school districts. There isn't that openness that you get with true networking -- like there is with charter schools. There needs to be more effective networking. It's a deficiency.

What can you discuss about the STW replicating effect for others who want to take your approach?

Each school, even in the traditional systems, each district is so unique. Even if you have the same population, there are so many variables/factors, that you can't truly replicate what one

school does in STW. There has to be a person in each school that really believes in this, and that's going to push this agenda -- to get it moving. If you don't have someone to totally buy in and get it moving, it's not going to be STW, because you're either going to have "activities" or a job-placement bureau. You must have a connecting component between what goes on in school and what goes on at work -- that's STW, that connection. And that's what's difficult in replicating. Because your community is different, your school population, your staff, your capabilities, and your creativity levels are all different. Replication is not really an issue at all, and I don't think it should be. Implementation involves not replicating, but adapting to the resources you have. Even if you have the same resources, you may not have the same school board willing to go along with the same types of initiatives. Encouragement, potential and strategies -- and sharing programs, share how you did it, or show them how you did it. And they can take all the data, look at what they have and consider what they can do with examples plus their own initiatives, and make it their own.

Does the brochure and other written materials about your school mention the STW component and if so, does it accurately reflect the environment and services offered?

Brochures and any other information we provide, whether it be newspapers, the public, or conferences, always mentions the STW component -- and accurately describes the curricula part of the STW component. We need to re-emphasize the way that curriculum impacts the community and the sharing process with the community. Sharing our facility with the community (e.g. our labs with people who don't have access to particular types of resources). Much of what we have in our labs come from resources within our community. That aspect of STW (sharing our facility with the community) has not been emphasized, but will be in the future.

To what extent are the colleges and universities involved in the STW component, if at all?

Much of our funding for our STW programs comes through the federal grant monies on STW, that are funneled through the state, then through county consortiums. All of our STW programs are started with mini-grants from that money, and then the school picks them up. Pima Community College is one of the members of that consortium, and they are resistant to participating with us in the STW format. One speculation is that Pima is branching into Santa Cruz County because Santa Cruz is one out of two counties in the state that does not have a community college. There is a huge demand for resources down here -- but limited resources. The College (Pima) doesn't have the quality of personnel down here that they have in Tucson to follow the traditional framework that they're use to working under. So our problem is not PCC per se, but more the local administration of PCC activities, along with a lack of imagination, creativity, and a willingness to take chances -- along with the lack of resources down here. We do have great cooperation and teaming efforts with Tucson College, AIC, the U of A, and Cochise College with their Nursing Program. We're getting cooperation with other area schools more so

than PCC because of politics and lack of resources.

How has university and college faculty/administrators reacted to the STW approach?

All of them have been very positive and supportive in their attitudes. My concern is that not all of them are willing to make a commitment to the Charter School. We might have more support if we were in Tucson, but a problem with this, is that it might be because we're rural and looked upon that way. Also a lack of resources. My own staff, one is an NAU person, another is a U of A person, another a PCC person, they're taking it upon themselves to take students there and through the doors and introduce them to us. So the groundwork is getting established by my staff, rather than coming from the universities.

To what extent are parents involved in the STW component?

Parents are at a low-level involvement in STW. Fifty percent of the students are 18 years or older, and many others have been through other school systems, so by the time they get to us, parents tend to expect us to do miracles with them. We get involvement in ways such as transportation, and parents coming to speak about their occupations. Parents who are in businesses are very supportive of STW -- when contacts need to be made with businesses by parents who are business people. Some parents are not in the position to be supportive in that way, except to say, 'We support you.' Working parents act as a bridge between the school and businesses -- particularly in the nursing program where there are five community members participating with the students (they work in the health care arena). They bring their kids here to participate in the nursing program. They become mentors by their use of our facilities, provide information on jobs that are available, and bring information to our STW Liaison. Parents will call us and say, 'I just talked to a friend and he has an opening in his shop.' The connection we make in our community is very personal because of the limited resources (unlike Tucson, where there is endless resources). We have taken a personal approach. So when there are a couple of students who are successful, the word gets around like wildfire. Businesses call us and provide information, then it's up to us to follow through and partner with them. You have to work with the personality of the population when you're rural. Work with the specifics of the culture and personality of the community (different from Tucson).

What types of evaluations exist that might be more specific towards STW?

'Diversified Work Credit,' consisting of a work packet. They sit with their work supervisor, fill out and answer questions like 'reasons why you're working here, what are your goals and objectives, what activities are you going to do to meet those goals and objectives.' And, if you change those goals and objectives, and move into a different format, then you re-do the format with your supervisor, take it to the STW Liaison/coordinator which looks it over, then gives it to the English teacher and they get English lesson credit for that. To get elective credit, students have to bring in their weekly schedule, pay-stubs, and the supervisors evaluation check-

list. Another way is NovaNet. We have our STW curriculum on NovaNet. Each career category/pathway out of NovaNet, there is a checklist and your teacher/supervisor must check off the items based on whether or not you've accomplished those items, whether or not you were introduced to them, and what level of performance was demonstrated within those areas. So there is specific assessment through the curriculum itself, through the 'Diversified Work Credit' and NovaNet. There is also assessment from their supervisors and bosses. We're currently working on them to bring their copy of their time cards, what time they checked in to work, to keep track of their attendance at work and whether or not they're getting there on time, and if they're staying there the whole time period. Our STW Liaison goes to their work sites at least every 2 to 3 weeks while they're scheduled to work, to observe and see what's going on.

What does an employer consider most about the STW student, when arranging for and considering internships or employment?

Most of them want to know if their English skills are good, if they read and write well, if they can communicate verbally with the public, and if their math skills are sufficient. That's basically what we're asked about the students. Many employers are concerned with attendance, attitude and dress. Employers will call up to make sure they wear the appropriate attire.

Are employers associated with STW involved in the grading and/or evaluation of the students other than a general report of progress?

Yes. The Evaluation Check Sheet out of NovaNet. Most jobs that are on the Career Pathways of NovaNet have a rating system of some kind. We go by their rating system on the work portion. Then we have our rating system on the curriculum portion. We combine the academic grade they receive on the curriculum portion with the rating their supervisor gave them on the work portion to receive their credits. And we value the supervisor's rating, because if it's a supervisor in diesel mechanics, there is no one around here that teaches that -- so I value their opinion as a diesel mechanic and respect their rating.

Is there a survey of graduates planned anytime in the near future?

We try to keep track of our graduates. We've had 56 graduates in the first two years. We will probably have between 23 to 28 graduates this year. We've had minimum staff before, but now we have an adequate staff to begin preparing for that.

What kind of businesses and/or trades have been most responsive to the STW approach?

The health care professions, building trades, and law enforcement agencies have been very cooperative and supportive. Also, different state agencies that deal with child care/pregnant mothers etc. and state and county agencies.

Does STW (working with businesses, employers, trades, etc.), greatly add to the bureaucratic process?

Yes. It adds to the red tape and can be a problem. The STW Liaison is a link to all the other components. For instance, we have a registered nurse out of Carondelet Health Network who teaches our Nursing Program. It took 4 months of red-tape and paper work to get it where all 8 partners in the program could agree to how it was going to work and that we could prove to them that we were not a fly-by-night organization -- that we had liability on each of the students. They then had to accept liability at a certain point in the transition period. This took 4 months of negotiation, paperwork, FAXing, etc. So it can be very burdensome. So without the help of the STW Liaison, and the nurse that runs the health program, and the law enforcement personnel putting in their time, these programs wouldn't exist because of the paper work. Without the STW Grant, the Title VII Grant, community grants, Project Intervention etc. to provide these people for us, we wouldn't be able to do it right now. For small schools in particular, with limited personnel, it could be a nightmare.

At this stage, does STW have an impact on your school?

Yes, it has a tremendous impact. It has increased the self-esteem of a number of our students dramatically. To be mixed in with community people, to be given adult responsibility instead of continuously being locked upon as children -- they're not. We don't have discipline problems, no fighting, no graffiti, no damage done to equipment or furniture. So the self-esteem of our students is very high compared to what it was when they first came. STW has also brought community into our school. The curriculum is infused with STW activities. One of the requirements of the 'Technical Foundation' which is the first credit on the curriculum in STW requires a resume be written and you go out and get applications and talk to people, do mock interviews, then do a research paper on how technology impacts us -- and that carries through to their English, they receive English credits for that. Research papers from other freshmen classes carry over to their English requirements. Most traditional schools do not require a freshman research paper -- because of STW it's required. STW enhances our curriculum.

Is there competition among students for specific STW placements with employers? If so, what are the more popular opportunities for students to compete for?

One of the concerns of the county people was that we might flood the market for a limited number of jobs. When we find there is only one position and there's 3 or 4 students in that Pathway that's interested, it becomes very competitive. And it should be. That's the real world. We had 12 students apply for 5 positions in a particular program. If it gets too big, we can't do it right. We also can't provide what they need in this community. So we have limited the number of students that can go into a cohort in any of our Career Pathways. The people in the community interview the candidates, and they choose the ones that will be in the program based on the following criteria: commitment, past history, need, and what's available in the community.

How well do you think your facility caters to the STW approach?

We'll never have strong vocational education courses here, because we don't have the facility. And we don't need to, we partner with people who have those facilities and send our kids there. For example, our carpentry students are here for 4 hours in the morning, then go there for 4 hours. So the way our schedule is, and the way we are year-around, it really helps us with STW. We don't lose track of our kids in the summer. So the structure of our system is a real strength in assisting STW.

What types of decisions are made by the Board of Directors and what types of decisions are made by faculty regarding STW?

Our Board supports me 100 percent. The person on the Board asked me to write the Charter (Mr. Conchola, he's my Board). We will be going as a non-profit organization as soon as the paperwork is completed. At that point, there will be an appointed board. I've already asked four community people with no kids attending here and no relatives working here. I intend to keep it that way. There will be an employee on the Board and a student on the board (there will always be a student on the Board). So 5 or 6 people on the Board, and a parent on the Board. Three business people will serve in an advisory/supervisory type capacity, but they will not make the decisions in school, I do.

Are all teachers at the school involved in STW or a select few?

All teachers, all staff. Everybody is involved or it won't work. It can't be a separate class over in "that room." It's not a job-placement bureau. The work can't be separate from school in STW. STW is the perfect program to use for integrating everything -- integration through all the disciplines. And into creating a well-rounded human being, not just somebody who got a degree or creating a 'carpenter.' Somebody that will function effectively in whatever direction they choose. It's not about giving them a placement -- they need to be able to find their own place. The days of keeping the same job your whole life is over. People will make major job changes between five and seven times in a life-time. And so our objective is not to make 'workers,' but to prepare people so that they can work -- wherever they can and want to work.

Appendix B: Transcript of Interview With Debra D'Amore

What has School-to-Work done to support your Charter School?

We received a mini-grant, a nice sized mini-grant last year, when my staff and I were at the middle school. That pretty much started the whole STW process in our district. Fortunately, the teacher who wrote that grant came with us to the charter school and brought all of her knowledge and materials about STW with her. That helped us get started, and helped us start the required STW class for our students. We also received a half-time STW Liaison through the STW Office. The Liaison works with the teachers here and the business people at the Park to develop internship opportunities and work-study programs.

Why is School-to-Work investing money in your school?

I think the STW Office is supportive of our program because we have identified STW to be one of our main points of focus. Our location is attractive and conducive to strong partnerships.

Why are the parents/students choosing your school over other schools?

The parents have told us that they have picked Vail because of the small, personalized environment. Also, because it is a part of the Vail School District. Right now, the high school students in the district go to TUSD high schools and other neighboring districts. When parents send their kids out there, outside of the district, the parents have little say. They can not vote on any issues because they don't live in that district. So parents feel a little powerless. And also because the staff here are long-time Vail District employees. We know the parents and they trust us.

Why this particular format and curriculum?

This format we chose because of the Tech Park opportunity, and we realize what role technology plays and will be playing in society and in the lives of students today. And that was a good foundation from which to develop a curriculum.

What can you discuss about the STW replicating effect for others who want to take your approach?

Success of charter schools lie in having support systems, and when you're sponsored by a district, all of those support systems are built in -- as opposed to Bill and Sally opening one in a mall somewhere that's not connected. So I would encourage people opening a charter school to be sponsored by their local district. Regarding STW and charter schools with people who want to operate with a strong STW component, work slowly. We've found there's a huge gap between the corporate world and the education world -- and both have assumptions and most are incorrect. So it takes time to build relationships and develop them carefully.

Does the brochure and other written materials about your school mention the STW component and if so, does it accurately reflect the environment and services offered?

STW is mentioned as a particular focus in the Charter. There is no brochure or written materials about STW at this time. There have been newspaper articles about Vail in which STW is mentioned. The brochure is a priority.

How has university and college faculty/administrators reacted to the STW approach?

Most at AIC have been very supportive. AIC has their students involved in the Park at the various corporations. Pima Community College has also opened up dialogue with us and seem supportive.

To what extent are parents involved in the STW component?

This is an area that needs work. We have a parent from the site council, a "STW parent." She will participate in the Pima County/Santa Cruz Parent Group. We're developing a survey and generally obtaining information on what they know about STW, and finding that parents know very little. But other parents are starting to get involved by offering to be guest speakers. Parents are also getting involved in field trips and other special events.

What types of evaluations exist that might be more specific towards STW?

We're developing internship evaluations along with cooperating employers. We have the students keep journals of their internship experiences and develop portfolios. The students that are actually employed by SIDDCO and IBM undergo regular employee evaluations.

What does an employer consider most about the STW student, when arranging for and considering internships or employment?

They want each student to have a resume. They look at their ability to write and put their thoughts down on paper. During the interview process, they look at students who can communicate verbally and do it well. They don't look so much at GPA or performance evaluations as much as the students' written and verbal skills through the interview process.

Are employers associated with STW involved in the grading and/or evaluation of the students other than a general report of progress?

We approach that with a team effort, whereby the employer gets together with the STW Liaison and the classroom teacher. It's a process of input/feedback.

Is there a survey of graduates planned anytime in the near future?

It's not yet planned, but as the school progresses in time, there will be talk about that.

Is STW a specific educational path to be chosen among several options, or is it built in based on a general, overall approach?

We have STW specific requirements to graduate. Each student must have two credits in STW to graduate. Every student at Vail for the first semester has to enroll in an 'Intro to STW' class which meets weekly. The next semester we hope to continue with STW in some form for every student. It's our hope that every student be involved in an internship before they graduate. School-to-Work is an underlying theme in everything we do.

What kind of response has been received from technical/trade unions about STW?

We have not yet tapped into that component.

What kind of businesses and/or trades have been most responsive to the STW approach?

Employers are finding a dwindling pool of applicants with the proper skills. People are interviewing with a lack of the necessary skills. So businesses around the area are realizing that it is to their advantage to get involved in the shaping of and working with the students. The kinds of businesses that Vail has found as very approachable are the high-tech businesses. High-tech businesses seem to be very supportive of the charter school approach.

Does STW (working with businesses, employers, trades, etc.), greatly add to the bureaucratic process?

This is a little too early to tell. We plan to have a process that enables new businesses and employers to come in, get involved in a way that brings them in smoothly without complicating things. We've found that it's better to keep internship/employment opportunities separate, whereby students have the choice between different businesses to become involved. Once they involve themselves in that one area, they don't participate in several different areas. This avoids potential complication between the school and the other businesses involved. The employers want to see loyalty from their interns -- especially from students who are getting paid and are actually employed. Employers (the big ones - IBM, Hughes, etc.) want to see loyalty from the start.

At this stage, does STW have an impact on everything you do, or is it an add-on component?

Everything we do with a student (talking or working with) we incorporate the idea of work and practical application, and draw that connection. Time and education. We want students to say, 'I want to go to Vail because of their STW component.'

Is STW generally accepted by everyone involved?

Some freshmen are resistant to STW, feeling that it's too early for them to start dealing with the world of work. We have to explain to them that STW is not about just a particular class but it's bigger than a class. It's a frame of mind, a preparation, a process of goal setting. STW can

be flexible and tailored to each individual student, and how each student can connect to STW based on their needs, desires, and goals.

How compatible to the Charter School philosophy is the STW component?

Very compatible. Providing choices, options, and alternatives -- that's what both charter schools and STW is about. In that sense they're very connected.

Is there competition among students for specific STW placements with employers? If so, what are the more popular opportunities for students to compete for?

Students go for the opportunities where there are more hours and where they get paid.

How well do you think your facility caters to the STW approach?

I can't think of a better scenario for the STW approach, when students can catch a bus to school, they're surrounded by more than 4000 employees associated with various companies, they go to school in the morning then go to work or do an internship, and at the end of the day take the school bus back home.

Is there an administrator that's more directly responsible for STW decisions or is it a general responsibility for everyone?

Our goal is that everybody is responsible in promoting and getting involved. Right now it's a small team effort with a STW Coordinator, a STW Liaison, and administration. We want STW to be <u>our</u> program, not yours or mine. Our ultimate goal is that every adult on campus is involved in STW.

Appendix C: Transcript of Interview With Wilma Soroosh

What has School-to-Work done to support your Charter School?

The School-to-Work Initiative provided the Tucson Indian Center with two mini-grants. One grant supported the effort to write the Charter School application. The second grant provides us with funds to research information for Vision High School-to-Work curriculum.

What are the considerations for someone who wants to open a charter school? What do they plan for?

Politics! Especially if you are an Indian-based organization. There will always be a concern about certain ethnic organizations providing a service for a limited population with tax dollars. Also, the structure of Indian funding. The big question is, 'who is responsible for Indian education?' The Federal government or the state? The biggest hurdle we have faced was the lack of understanding the State Board of Charter Schools had about the Tucson Indian Center, how we are funded, our resources, and the unique situations Native American students are faced with in the public school system. My recommendation to anyone or any organization that plans to apply for a charter school is, network first. The information you get may save you time, money, and limit your stress.

Why are parents looking for that alternative? What is their attitude?

Parents expressed the following reasons for an alternative program.

- Academic difficulties in the traditional school.
- Safe environment.
- Small class size.
- Cultural sensitive program.
- Remedial programs.
- To avoid negative peer pressure.
- School-to-Work pathway.

What types of barriers are involved in opening a charter school? What has the start-up process been like?

Barriers included;

- Coordinating the start-up efforts without funds.
- The Tucson Indian Center lacked the understanding of how the Charter Board operates.
- Vision is lacking the network system that other educational institutions take for granted.
- Being one of the first non-profit organizations to apply to be a Charter School.
- The State Board for Charter Schools lacks the understanding of how the Tucson Indian Center is funded.

What is it about your school as to why School-to-Work is investing money in your facility?

There are several reasons why School-to-Work may have invested money in the Tucson Indian Center School-to-Work program.

- Unique population
- Business connections
- Non-traditional school

Does the brochure and other written materials about your school mention the STW component and if so, does it accurately reflect the environment and services offered?

Yes. Both our brochure and pre-enrollment packet mentions the School-to-Work component. Both materials indicate that students will combine quality academic and vocational classes followed by job shadowing and/or work experience.

To what extent are the colleges and universities involved in the School-to-Work component, if at all?

Pima Community College and the Tucson Indian Center are currently trying to work out an agreement for co-enrolling students in the Center for Training and Development and Pima Community College courses. At this time, the University of Arizona is not involved.

How has university and college faculty/administrators reacted to the School-to-Work approach and your Charter School in general?

Pima Community College administrators are supporting Vision High School. In terms of the School-to-Work concept, I am not sure. The Center for Training and Development program focuses on preparing students for the work force and has business ties.

To what extent are parents involved in the School-to-Work component?

Parents will be involved in the School-to-Work component in the following ways:

- Asking their employer for job shadowing and work experience sites
- Being a guest speaker at Vision High School to talk about their work experience and career
- Being a part of their child's decision

Are parents more or less supportive of other educational pathways other than School-to-Work?

Most parents I talked to were very supportive of the School-to-Work pathway. The concept of exposing students to careers, job shadowing, and work experience seems to be ideal for the future students of Vision High School. Reasons expressed for the interest are;

- Student's current exposure to occupations are limited
- Higher education is not a reality for many of our disadvantaged families

- Many of our future students prefer to be out of the classroom, rather than in, using their hands and minds, without the classroom structure that they find limited and unrewarding.
- General Education pathways have not proven to benefit high school graduates
- College Prep is often a scary thought for many of our students because they have no role models or support systems.
- Many students know that their high school has not academically prepared them for higher education regardless of their grades
- Financially, most of our students must have a job to help support their family

What types of evaluations exist that might be more specific towards School-to-Work e.g., portfolios, employer surveys, internship evaluations etc.?

Currently, we have not developed any evaluations for the School-to-Work component. However, we will require students to do a portfolio, take a Career Exploration course for high school graduation, and each student will be evaluated by the School-to-Work teacher in and out of the classroom, also by their job shadowing and/or Work Experience Supervisor. All students will be given the opportunity to enroll in the pathway of their choice. Additionally, no student will be screened out of a pathway because of their academic ability or disability. In the event that a student is not able to perform at the required level, all efforts will be made to assist the student before recommending another pathway.

Is there a survey of graduates planned anytime in the near future?

Yes. Vision High School will not only do a survey of graduates, but also a follow-up of student's academic and work activities for three years beyond graduation.

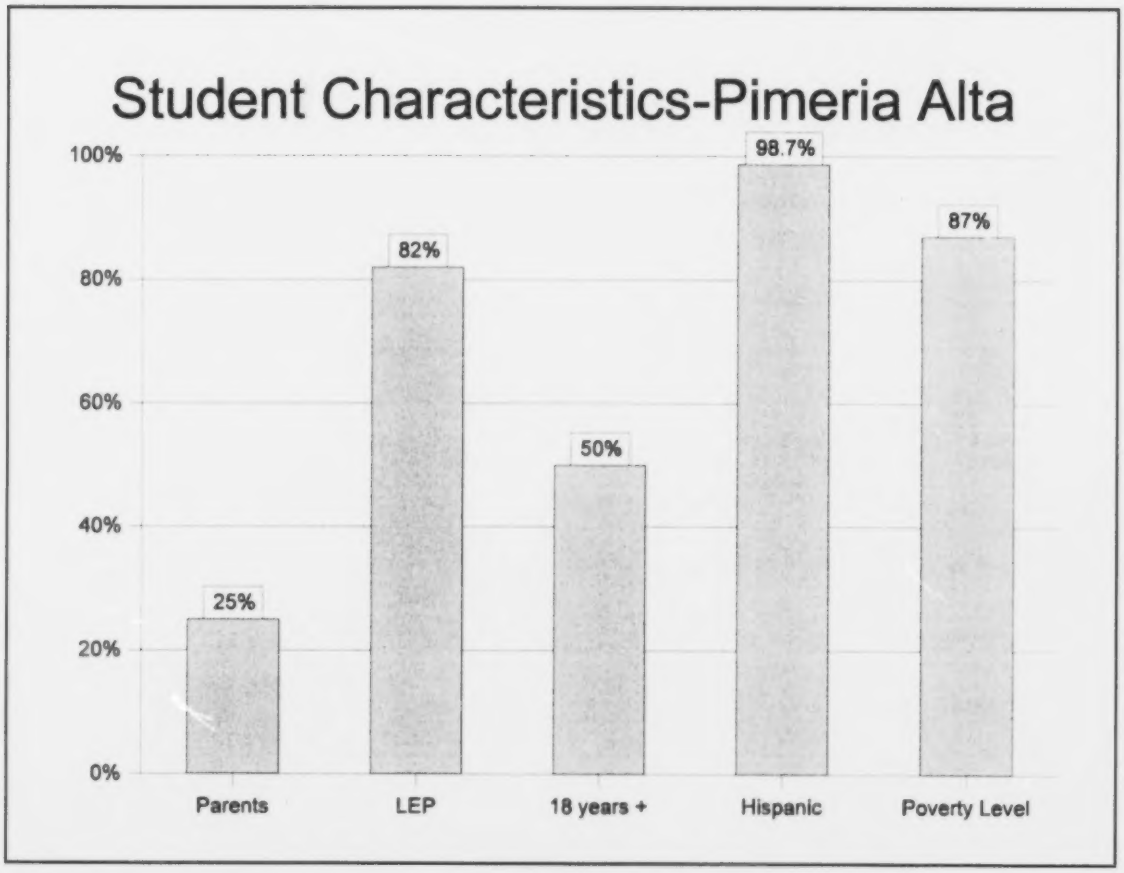
Is School-to-Work a specific educational path to be chosen among several options, or is it built in based on a general, overall approach?

The School-to-Work component is built into all three pathways (College Prep, General Education, and Vocational Education). All Vision High School students will be required to take Career Explorations, Job Shadowing and Work Experience.

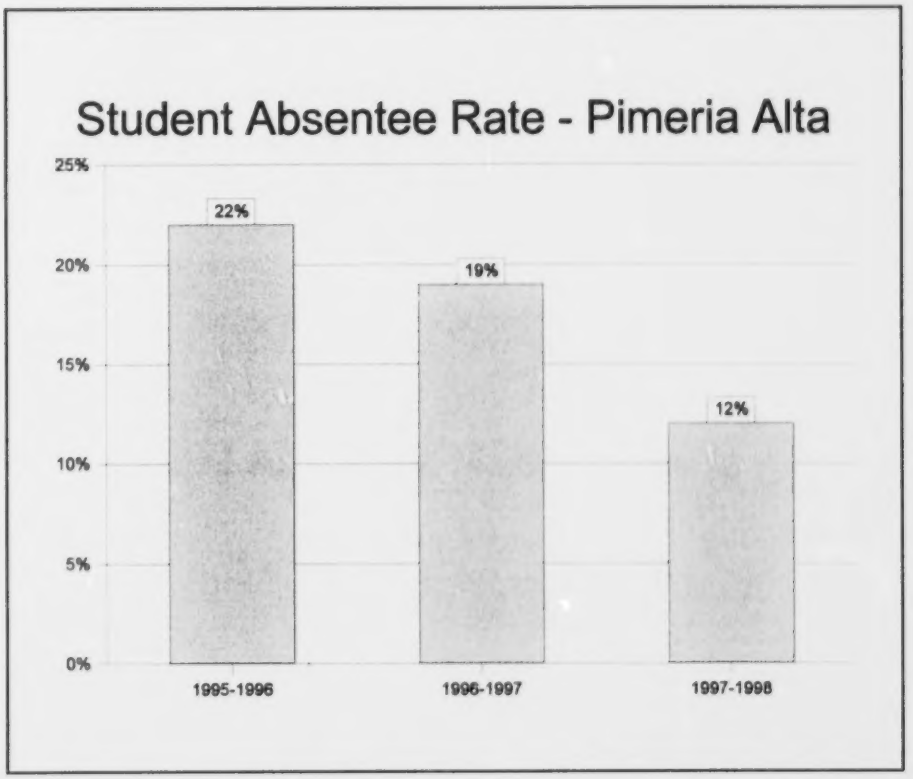
Are all teachers at the school involved in School-to-Work or a select few?

All teachers will be involved since the curriculum is integrated.

Appendix D:

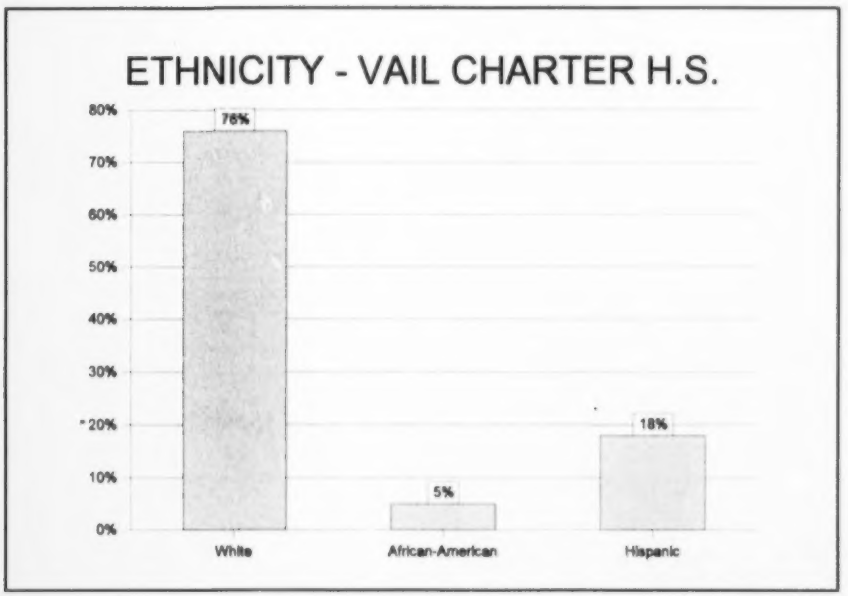


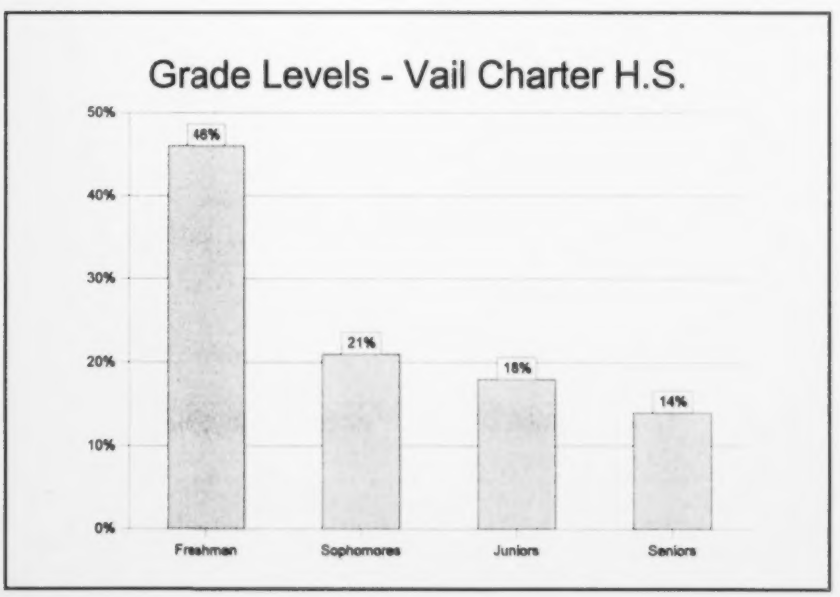
Note. LEP=Limited English Proficient. Parents=students who are parents. Poverty level=economic status. Total number of student population=227.



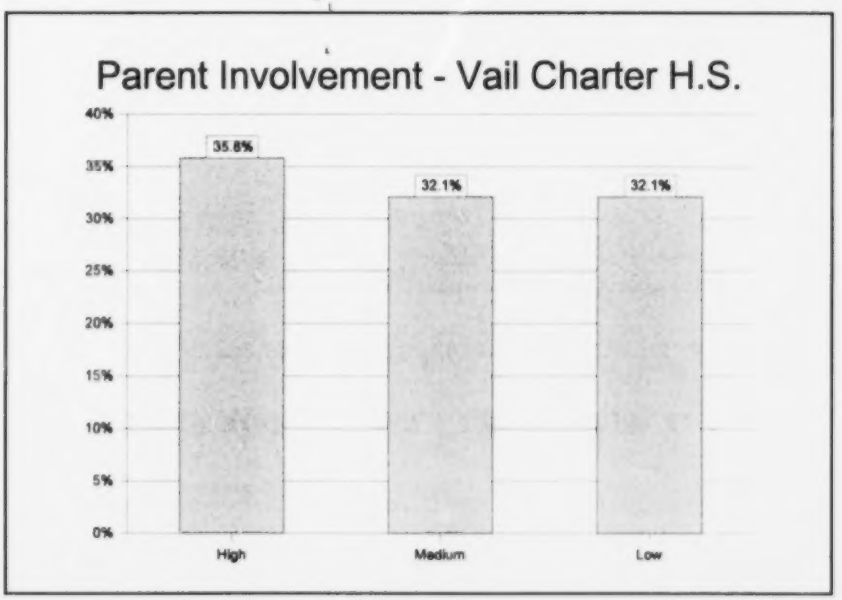
BEST COPY AVAILABLE

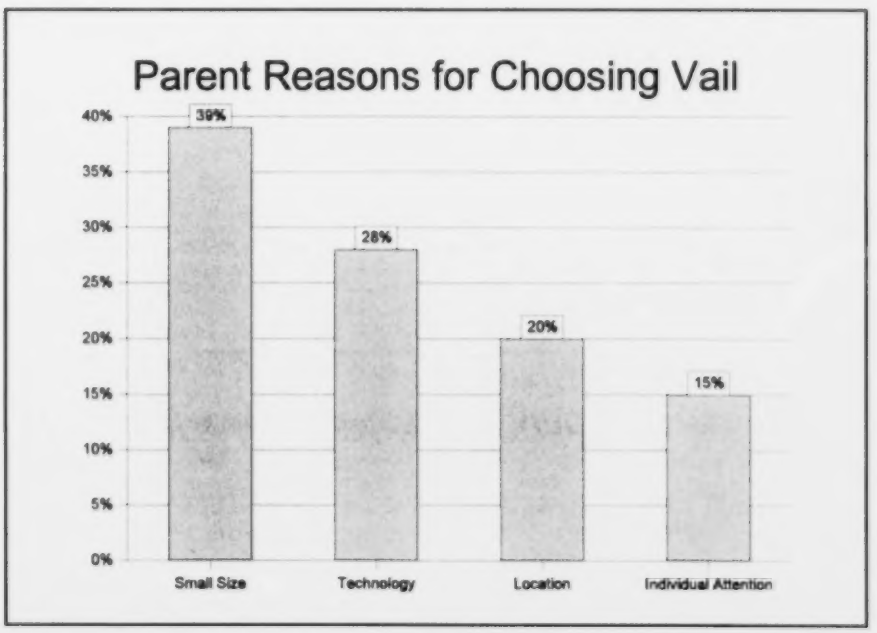
Appendix E:



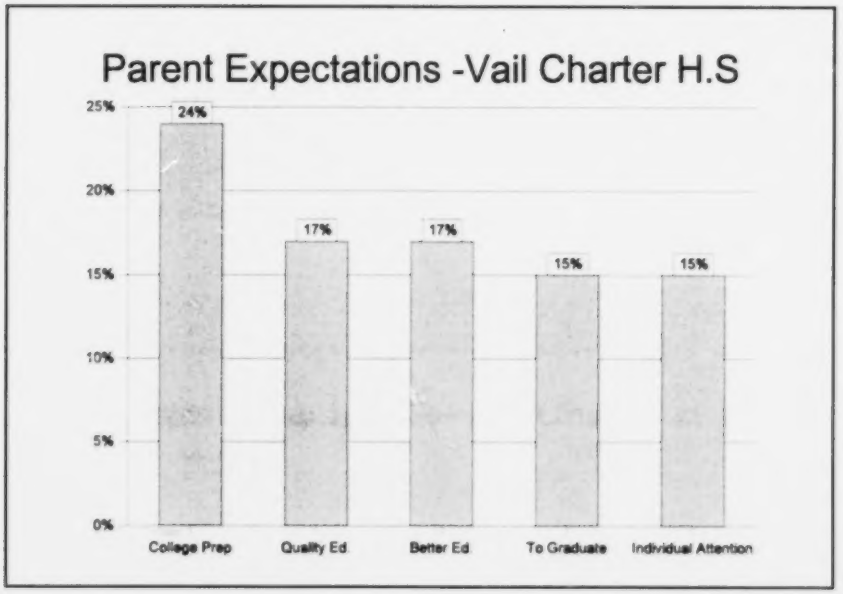


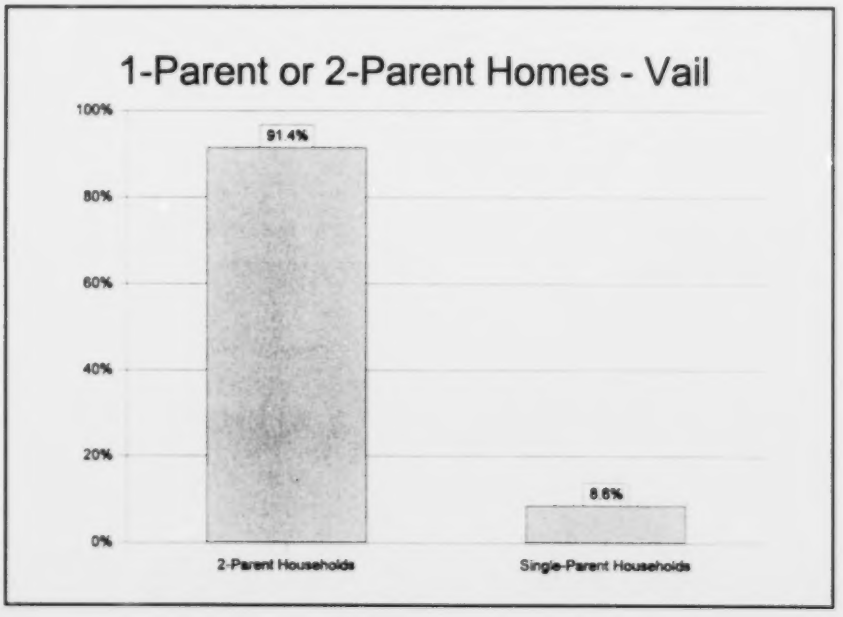
BEST COPY AVAILABLE





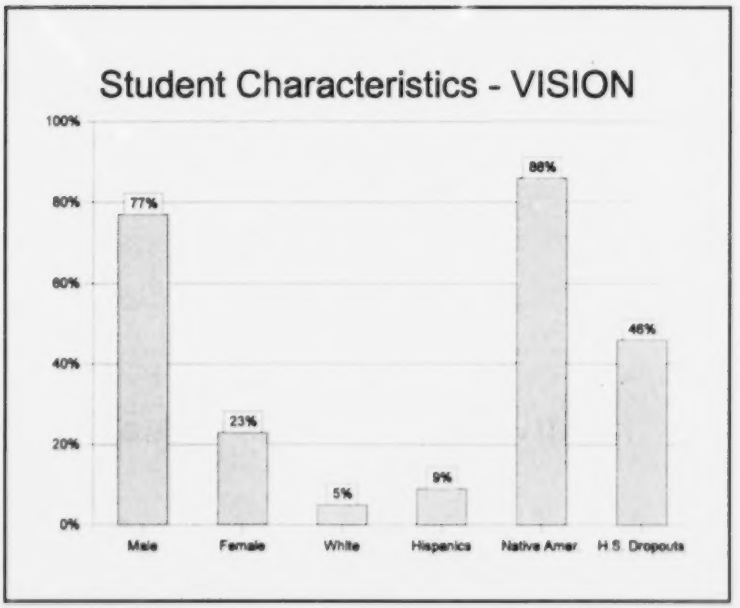
BEST COPY AVAILABLE

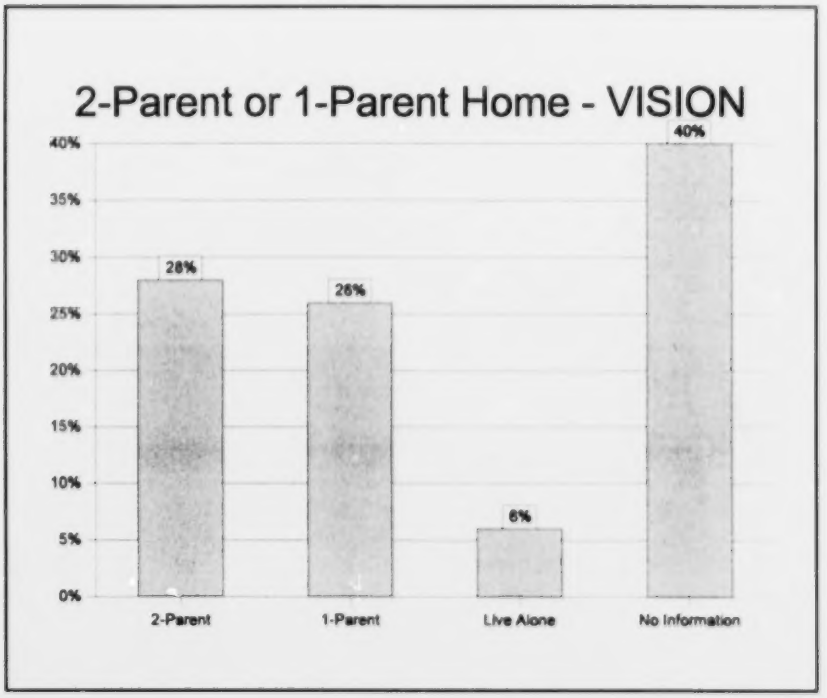




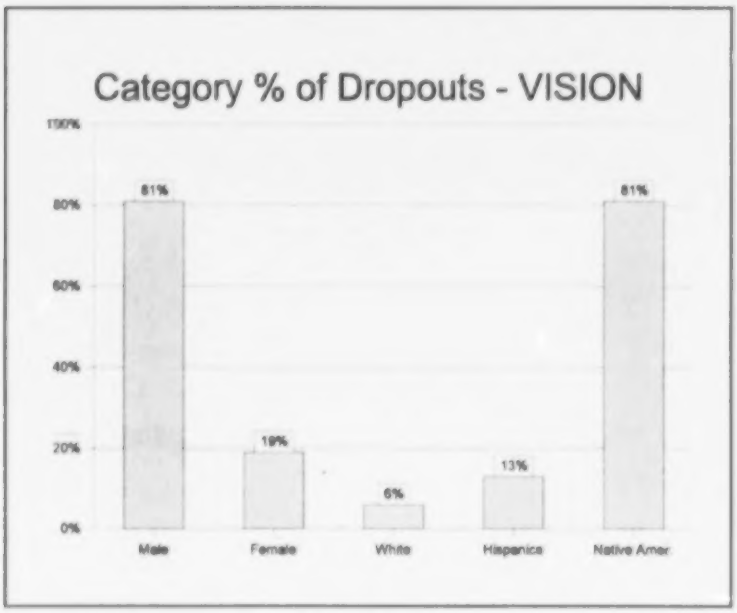
BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Appendix F:





BEST COPY AVAILABLE



BEST COPY AVAILABLE